

City of Auburn
Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 7, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mayor Berola with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance of all present.

Mayor Berola called for the roll. Present were Mayor Berola, Clerk Warwick, Treasurer Williams, Alderman Powell, Alderman Marquis, Alderman Garrett, Alderman Royer, Alderman Hemmerle, Alderwoman Sheppard, Alderman Karhliker, and Alderman Johnson. Also present were Superintendent Henson, Office Manager Ponsler, Chief Campbell, and Attorney Moredock.

Mayor Berola received a call from a ratepayer who will not be paid until shut off day. The ratepayer knows they will have to pay the late fee but wanted extra time so they would not be shut off and then must be without water until the next business day (gas would not be shut off because of the low outside temperature). A discussion followed from several council members. The ratepayer has not had any past payment issues. Mayor Berola proposed that the ratepayer has until 2:00 PM on Friday, February 11, 2022, to make a payment or they would be shut off, there was no dissent from the council. This would be a one-time exemption.

Ben Royer asked the council about vacating an alley between his residence at 511 North 5th Street and property owned by Royell Holdings, LLC at 515 North 5th Street. There were several questions about other properties to the east and how they would take over their part of the alley. Alderman Royer left the meeting at 7:21 PM so the council could discuss the issue further. The consensus was that vacating the alley would require a public hearing and notifying the seven property owners to the east of the vacation. The council came up with offering a construction easement so Ben Royer can place a conduit containing a data line and electricity between the properties. Alderman Royer returned to the meeting at 7:36 PM. Ben Royer was agreeable to the construction easement, Attorney Moredock will work on the agreement needed to provide the easement.

Clerk Warwick presented the January 18, 2022 meeting minutes for the council's review and approval. A motion was made by Alderman Karhliker to approve the minutes, second by Alderman Marquis.

AYES: Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Marquis, Powell, and Sheppard
NAYES: Garrett and Royer
PRESENT: None

Clerk Warwick presented the January 6, 2022, special council meeting minutes for the council's review and approval. A motion was made by Alderman Garrett to approve the minutes, second by Alderman Marquis. Alderman Royer abstained from the vote.

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Marquis, Powell, and Sheppard
NAYES: None
PRESENT: None

Clerk Warwick placed an IML article related to the annual Economic Statement on all the council members' seats. It explains the changing rules regarding the Economic Statement of Interest.

Treasurer Williams presented the bills list from January 19, 2022, to February 7, 2022, for the council's review and approval. There was a question regarding two charges from Ray O'Herron's, there is a charge for the new firearms for the police and the other charge is for the ammunition. A motion was made by Alderman Garrett to approve the bills list, second by Alderwoman Sheppard.

AYES: Hemmerle, Johnson, Marquis, Powell, Karhliker, Royer, and Sheppard
NAYES: Garrett
ABSENT: None

Treasurer Williams presented the budget report for the council's information, there was no action needed. Alderman Johnson noted that the General Fund looks good, the Water Fund is approximately \$33,000.00 in the red, the Sewer Fund is \$64,000.00 in the black, the Gas Fund is \$73,000.00 in the black. Alderman Johnson wants the Public Utilities committee to look at the Water Fund closer. The council asked for a monthly budget report from Office Manager Ponsler so they and department heads would have the current total of the expenses. Office Manager Ponsler was doing it quarterly but will now provide it monthly.

Attorney Moredock reported that there was a change in the Video Gaming rules. The city currently charges \$25.00 per video gaming terminal, the new rules allow the city to charge up to \$250.00 per video gaming terminal. The fee would be charged to the establishment, some establishments might have a fee-sharing agreement with their machine providers. There was a short discussion, and the council did not act on the changing of fees.

Attorney Moredock requested an Executive Session regarding pending litigation.

Chief Campbell reported that both the new handguns and ammunition have been received. Regarding the tasers, some items are in while they are waiting on other items. Two officers have received waivers to go to the full-time transition course from March 7, 2022, through March 17, 2022. There was an incident with one of the squad cars, it was hit by a city truck during snow removal. Chief Campbell estimates the damage to be between \$3,000.00 and \$6,000.00; he will get bids and then determine the next steps.

Superintendent Henson reported that if we ship off our water samples to test for phosphorus and ammonia it would cost \$130.00 per week. They have found testing equipment that would cost \$7,800.00. Henson would like to do it in-house and in the long term, the city would save money. A motion was made by Alderman Johnson to approve the purchase of a testing apparatus to test for phosphorus and ammonia at a price not to exceed \$7,800.00; second by Alderman Garrett.

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Marquis, Powell, Karhliker, Royer, and Sheppard
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None

Henson reported that the snow removal last week went well, he is looking into additional equipment to help with the snow removal process.

Office Manager Ponsler reported that Lori Wilson has started work, she will here for payroll and will learn more about the systems. Lori will be working three days a week, two full days, and one-half day, they will adjust as needed. Ponsler will start sending end-of-year numbers in March to the council for FY2023 planning. Mayor Berola mentioned that Jason Jones has expressed interest in doing the city audit, he is an Auburn resident and a certified public accountant.

Alderman Johnson asked for an executive session regarding personnel.

Alderman Karhliker had no report for the Public Works committee.

Alderman Johnson reported the new IEPA regulations regarding our water treatment plant and the new phosphorus level requirements. Currently, we are below the IEPA limits but those numbers might rise in the wetter months; we are asking for an extension on the limits. Regarding the Western Acres lift station, currently, it is inoperable, Superintendent Henson has reached out to several local vendors to get repairs, he must contact a vendor in Saint Louis because the local vendors did not want to do the repairs. The replacement of the lift station is estimated to be between \$600,000.00 and \$900,000.00 but those costs can be offset by the American Rescue Plan funding that the city has received.

Alderman Johnson reported that the city met with Doug Baker from Springfield Plastics about annexation and running a water line to their business. Since the city is currently improving the water main on Route 104, we would have a 10-inch line that could be extended to the business. The issue is that the fire insurance rating requires a 750 gallon per minute flow, and we would only be able to provide a 500 gallon per minute flow. Alderman Johnson stated that we would like to see Springfield Plastics pay for the installation and repayment plan be worked out through sales tax revenue. Springfield Plastics would need to provide a sales tax revenue projection. Any annexation would have to be contiguous and there are two landowners between the city and Springfield Plastics. Attorney Moredock will look at the land size requirements for annexation. A discussion followed regarding city expansion. Several issues need to be addressed before the city takes any next steps. There is no need for an Executive Session for land acquisition.

Alderman Johnson presented the IEPA reimbursement request Number 5 for Phase II for \$108,413.95 for the council's approval. A motion was made by Johnson to approve the \$108,413.95 payment, second by Alderwoman Sheppard.

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Marquis, Powell, Karhliker, Royer, and Sheppard

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Alderwoman Sheppard had no report for the Health & Safety committee, she did thank the city work crew and the police for a great job during the last snowstorm.

Alderwoman Sheppard reported the debris at 512 South Kennedy Street will be picked up by the waste hauler, there was a delay due to the owner and the inclement weather. The Electronic Recycling Day will be on April 24, 2022, and will be held at the Fire Department.

Alderman Hemmerle is looking at prices for replacement flags for Veterans Park, he is looking to get multiple flags because they will be needed in the future. It will be discussed at the next Parks meeting.

Clerk Warwick had no report for the Economic Development committee.

Alderman Royer reported that he checked with three companies regarding a sound system on the square. There is an all-in-one system that operates on the 900 MHz spectrum it is approximately \$2,000.00 but the operating spectrum is a concern. Another option is to replace the poles with an option that would replace the lights with color-changing LED and speakers built into the poles, the cost would be approximately \$7,000.00 per pole and there are four poles on the square. The final option is for a sound system on the square that would be approximately \$8,162.00. It has been difficult to get quotes because of the lack of inventory for the different sound system providers. Alderman Garrett noted that there is a \$4,000,000.00 grant available to Route 66 related locations. Alderman Royer also noted that an in-council chamber sound system would be approximately \$1,600.00. Alderman Royer will investigate the issue further and report back to the council.

A motion was made by Alderman Garrett to go into executive session regarding pending litigation and personnel at 8:53 PM, second by Alderwoman Sheppard. Taken by voice vote.

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Marquis, Powell, Karhliker, Royer, and Sheppard
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None

A motion to come back into regular session from the executive session was made by Alderman Garrett at 9:21 PM, second by Alderman Marquis. Taken by voice vote.

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Marquis, Powell, Karhliker, Royer, and Sheppard
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None

Motion to adjourn was made at 9:23 PM by Alderman Garrett, second by Alderman Karhliker. Taken by voice vote.

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Marquis, Powell, Karhliker, Royer, and Sheppard
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Warwick
City Clerk of Auburn