

**Murphysboro City Council Meeting
August 29, 2017**

The Murphysboro, Illinois, City Council met in regular session, pursuant to its ordinances, on the 29th day of August, 2017. Mayor Stephens called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and invited Father Gummersheimer to lead the council in prayer. Following the invocation, Mayor Stephens led the council in the pledge of allegiance to the flag. Mayor Stephens then directed City Clerk Cottonaro to call the roll. The roll was called with the following

Present: Barb Hughes, Jance Curry-Witzman, Russell Brown, Herb Voss, Gary McComb, John Erbes, Danny Bratton, Mike Bastien, Gloria Campos, W. J. Pittman

Absent:

Motion: To approve the minutes of the August 15, 2017 council meeting. All aldermen received a copy of the minutes, for their review, prior to the meeting.

Motion by Alderman McComb

Second by Alderman Brown

Mayor called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

Motion Carried

Motion: To approve the accounts payable, register #696 through August 29, 2017, accounts receivable through August 29, 2017 and payroll through August 29, 2017. All aldermen received a copy of the accounts payable, accounts receivable and payroll for their review, prior to the meeting.

Motion by Alderman Bastien

Second by Alderman Campos

Mayor called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

Motion Carried

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS

Alderman Pittman opened the Budget & Finance Meeting.

A part time grant writer was discussed. Both Alderman Pittman and Alderman Voss encountered articles and research that indicated non approval of commissions and percentage fees stating they were considered unethical by almost all professional organizations and funders. However, Alderman Pittman stated if we are willing to do percentage nothing would be unethical but if our grant would not be eligible because of the percentage commission that would not be good. Alderman Voss stated it was okay to look at multiple grant writers but he thought that Mr. Hollo would see it through and that he was ethical. Mr. Hollo is willing to negotiate on fees. Alderman Bratton and Alderman Voss stated we had gotten burned before when we paid a grant writer. Mayor Stephens stated he will also check it out and we will invite Mr. Hollo to attend the next meeting.

Scott Evans presented the following financial reports: Schedule of Operating Expenses by Department vs. Budget, Schedule of Sales/HR Tax Receipts, Schedule of State Income Tax Receipts Vouchered, Schedule of Healthcare Costs, Comparison of Budgeted vs. Actual Payroll, Schedule of Costs Related to WWTP Construction, and Schedule of Bank Loan Balances.

Scott Evans discussed Kinkaid water billing increase. Prior we paid \$2.31 per 1,000 gallons and that is increasing to \$2.61 per 1,000 gallons or approximately \$90,000 more a year. We need to be considering if we want to raise rates on the effective date, July 1, 2017, or at budget time.

Health insurance proposal was discussed. Jamie Simmons, insurance broker talked to council. Mayor Stephens, Sandra and several employee representatives have been meeting over the last several months about new insurance proposals. City taken a 40% increase this year with Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Replace this plan with Aetna Plan and save \$20,000 a month on premiums; from \$57,000 per month for premium to \$37,000 per month for premium. We received approval from the employees and we have kept out of pocket down. We tried various solutions but there were problems. We looked at self-funding and got turned down by several carriers due to medical conditions. We hope to educate employees on how to use the insurance. New plan starts 10/1/17. Alderman Hughes inquired if this insurance is substantially similar in nature to our other plan, which is what unions require. She was told that from the employees standpoint no changes, maintain benefits. It will cost us \$240,000 more a year if we don't deal with it. Although this is a \$5,000 deductible, through a tool called payflex we are back down to a \$250 out of pocket cost for employees. This is a viable option. Mayor Stephens stated we are self-insuring the employees' deductible.

Motion: To approve the AETNA/Pay Flex health insurance proposal.

Motion by Alderman Campos

Second by Alderman Bratton

Alderman Pittman called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

Motion Carried

No public comment

Alderman McComb opened the Building and Grounds Meeting.

Opening of sealed bids for the purchase of surplus vehicles of 2002 GMC Yukon and 1995 Chevrolet GMT-400 Bucket Truck. Only one bid for the Yukon and that did not qualify on the minimum we stated.

Mayor Stephens discussed the voluntary annexation agreements. He has meet with Tim Lee, Jim Stewart and Harold Sheffer once a month for five months looking at annexation and what we could possibly do. Mayor stated it is expensive and people don't want to be annexed. We could not do before and we cannot now. With this agreement someone adjacent to the city limits who wants to be annexed could be. This annexation would allow for the abatement of the city's portion of property tax for both commercial and residential. Taxes would go up in increments for ten years. This is a boiler plate legal agreement. Attorney Heller stated people wanting to take advantage of the city's services should annex into the city, we should never allow that without annexing in-we should always make them annex in.

No public comment.

Alderman Erbes opened the Community Relations Committee Meeting.

There was no old or new business or public comment.

Alderman Bastien opened the Public Improvement Committee Meeting.

BLIP issue was discussed. There are a few things they want to work on yet. They want to come back next meeting.

Signage request from Unique Shops was discussed. Lori addressed the council stating that 14th Street has several businesses and they are looking at a historical looking sign with the name of the street and listing the businesses on 14th Street. Businesses would pay for the sign. They will get the council specs when they know where they are putting the sign, for now they want an okay to proceed. Attorney Heller stated we would have to change our sign ordinances and zoning code. Eric Kennedy stated the request has to go through IDOT, it is a state right of way. Mayor Stephens encouraged her to reach out to the state.

Mayor Stephens discussed rezoning of South 17th Street (west of Logan Museum). Zoning can come through the council or zoning board. Mayor wants to rezone. Attorney Heller stated that changing the zoning will not change the activity. The

activity is grandfathered in; however, abandonment of grandfathered use will lose the use. Blaine has sited the owner on violations, but Mr. Johnson hasn't commented. Alderman Voss stated move forward and our intentions will be known and start the clock of 18 months. Eric stated we can write tickets every day if we want to; in court it's considered one incident. Alderman Bratton stated we should cite once a week. Has Mr. Johnson paid any citations? Approximately \$33 comes to the city from fines. Rachel Ensor stated that there was concrete dumped on the property creating a dust hazard for the people living in the area. It was stated that he worked as a hauler on the water line project and that he dumped the concrete on his property. It was stated we should vote and have Eric to direct and proceed with paperwork to turn into the zoning board to change zoning. We need to decide which zoning code we want. Parks were discussed but a park is a permitted use. Mayor Stephens stated he was not quite ready to make a motion yet.

Alderman Campos stated that people from out of town told her how well things worked during the eclipse and praised the police department.

Public comment-Cathy Norton stated it was fun to watch the traffic jam on Walnut Street.

Alderman Bratton opened the Public Works Committee Meeting.

Osburn Street extension update. Harold Sheffer had indicated that the issue is still in limbo, no decision yet. IDOT said they would have closed that off if they had known it was a street when they put in the street lights.

Tim Lee had a doctor's appointment so we will hold the discussion of lining of sewer lines until next week.

Chris Grither issue of a billboard request was discussed. We have to change our zoning to allow billboards to industrial or change uses of property in B2 district. Either way the request has to go to the zoning board. State also has to approve the request. Alderman Bratton stated we should refer Chris to the zoning board.

Motor Fuel Resolution was discussed.

Motion: To approve the Motor Fuel Resolution in the amount of \$52,288.20.

Motion by Alderman McComb

Second by Alderman Brown

Alderman Bratton called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

Motion Carried

No public comment.

Alderman Brown opened the Public Safety Committee Meeting.

The traffic issues on North 16th Street were discussed. Chief Roberts had a detail there from the 17th -29th. There were verbal warnings for speeding or stop sign violations, seven citations written for stop signs, 13 citations written for speeding,

two citations written for no insurance and two citations written for no child safety restraints. Offender included students, bus driver, school employees, residents and persons cutting through the neighborhood to avoid construction on North 14th Street. It is a high traffic area in the morning and afternoon times but does not appear out of proportion to other high traffic areas of the city. He checked traffic accident reports from August 1, 2017 through August 29, 2017 and of the 237 reports only nine occurred within this area of operation. Of those nine, six occurred on 14th Street; three occurred within the area of concern expressed by the citizens at the last meeting. It is his intention to continue the area on the traffic enforcement list disseminated to patrol officers. He will continue in the chief's rotation. Mayor Stephens requested the chief report this information to Mrs. Mueller. Mayor stated it is important that people who have issues know we took action. Alderman Campos still want stop signs.

Consideration of barring weapons at the city storage yard was discussed. Attorney Heller stated that he was in error when he stated we could bar concealed/carry weapons. We cannot pre-empt the state statute on that. We can prohibit on private property, municipal buildings, schools, universities but the statute does not say government owned property.

Chief Roberts discussed the purchase of two vehicles from the seized assets fund. He had written a grant with a 55% match for the two vehicles. This was a rural development grant, however, Washington said we are too strong financially so they would not allow the grant. He has the funds to purchase.

Motion: To approve the purchase of two 2018 Dodge Charger police AWD V-8 vehicles for the price of \$23,417.00 and \$23,247.00 respectively.

Motion by Alderman Hughes

Second by Alderman Campos

Alderman Brown called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

Motion Carried

Mayor Stephens stated that a resident had told him that he had been written a ticket for moving through a stop sign. The fine was \$125 for the ticket and he thought that was too much. Mayor Stephens inquired how we determine the amount of the fine. He was told all standard violations are set by the Illinois Supreme Court, and that is the standard fee for non-aggravated vehicle violations.

No public comment.

Alderman Hughes opened the Personnel Committee Meeting.

Alderman Hughes stated that the administration job application deadline was yesterday and Mayor Stephens will be looking at those.

We still need two people on Chief Roberts' staff. We are testing and interviewing. Although we hired for the retirements we have lost the Brooks brothers and have to hire for their positions.

No public comment.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor has no items on his report but introduced the new director for the Jackson Growth Alliance. She addressed the council and assured us that she is working toward the same goal as we are. She stated that she also is a grant writer and she has had experience and would like to help us with that.

ALDERMEN ANNOUNCEMENTS/REQUESTS

Barb Hughes	Feed the Team is October 20 th . She will organize and asked for assistance. \$20 per alderman would be great. Also, we should have a sign for the city truck in the Apple Festival Parade.
Jance Curry-Witzman	Nothing
Russell Brown	Has the same issue of Costa's house. Attorney Heller stated we can cite the property owner.
Herb Voss	Nothing
Gary McComb	Inquired who will be walking in the parade.
John Erbes	Inquired about the WWTP road status. He was informed that we are waiting to do close out on it before we can do anything.
Dan Bratton	We are working on a punch list and supposed to be doing that soon. Contractor had someone show up. Inquired of Eric regarding 16 th & Garside on status of yard-Milton's status of ticket. Informed that attorney is working toward that; court date is in September
Mike Bastien	Nothing
Gloria Campos	Happy Labor Day, Apple Festival. Great eclipse.
W. J. Pittman	Inquired about status of loading zone at Masonic Lodge. Mayor Stephens will check on it.

DEPARTMENT HEAD ANNOUNCEMENTS/REQUESTS

Ed Heller	Nothing.
Sandra Ripley	Nothing

Steve Swafford Makanda Pomona Somerset Fire Protection District wants to use vacant house for training. Mayor Stephens stated he has no issue with that, to proceed. It is on South 20th & Dewey Street.

Chad Roberts Nail guns and compressors were still at range and being used there. Alderman Bratton asked if there were any other tools. Chief stated that Sgt. Smelter doesn't know of any.

Scott Evans Encourage council to get back on the voluntary annexations. We lost 700 people in the last census, or approximately \$90,000 a year for ten years. Sales tax is 65% of general fund revenue.

Eric Kennedy Nothing

Firefighters will stage a fight at the Apple Festival. They would like 200-250 people out to see the fight.

Motion: To adjourn

Motion by Alderman Bratton

Second by Alderman McComb

Mayor Stephens called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.