

Mayor Charles "Skip" Lee called a meeting of the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 pm on Monday, March 7, 2016. Roll call. Present: Aldermen Bob Conklin, Retha Elston, Joe Martin, Chris Schuchard, John Stauter, and Chris Wilen. Absent: None.

Also present were City Attorney Ron Coplan, City Manager Scott Shumard, Finance Director Cindy Von Holten, Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt, Fire Chief Gary Cook, Police Lieutenant Jeff Mohr, Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader and City Clerk Marie Rombouts.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Bill Inks stated that he terminated service with Comcast and was instructed to return his equipment to UPS since Comcast no longer has a local office. Inks asked if Comcast could be required to maintain a local office through their franchise agreement. Mayor Lee stated that he is in agreement with Inks. Comcast's agreement states they will maintain a local office but legal action would be necessary to force them to comply. Comcast's legal team is much stronger than the City's. Alderman Conklin stated that he has had plenty of requests to send equipment for Comcast through his business, Riverside Ship and Pack. Customers need to request a prepaid shipping label to send equipment back to Comcast.

Tom Slothower, a 75-year resident of Sterling, recited crime statistics that he recently read in the paper. He is concerned about these increases and the shortage of Police Officers. He believes Sterling needs to be pro-active and work with churches and community leaders. Slothower's second concern is the poor condition of the roads. He believes the City should have an advisory referendum to raise taxes for road repairs or raise taxes for just five years to fix the roads.

Pastor Scott Porter of Abiding Word Christian Center expressed disappointment about his agreement with the City for property at the northeast corner of Lynn Boulevard and Sixth Avenue. The agreement was negotiated and then what was presented to him for a signature was unacceptable. This five acres of land, worth \$112,000, is in exchange for a \$53,000 debt. The 30' wide curb cut at Lynn Boulevard was never agreed to be a right-in and right-out only. This is holding up the path development for the Sterling Park District.

Alderman Stauter stated that the church could grant the Park District the easement since the City is not the owner of the property. Pastor Porter stated that this is on the City to give the easement to the Park District. Mayor Lee stated the Church could give

the easement to the Park District and the property swap for the debt can be handled separately.

Manager Shumard stated that a full intersection at this location is too close to the Sixth Avenue intersection. The right-in and right-out curb cut has been a part of the agreement from the beginning.

Tom Brackemeyer, 1512 Fifth Avenue, is happy to see the bike path coming down Sixth Avenue. He is concerned with the condition of the sidewalk in the 400 and 500 blocks of East LeFevre. There is no curb and the sidewalk is a trip hazard.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as follows:

- A) City Council Minutes
 - 1) Regular Meeting of February 16, 2016
 - 2) Study Session of February 22, 2016
- B) Bills and Payroll totaling \$620,966.36
- C) Resolution #R2016-03-02 Authorizing the Sale of Surplus City Equipment**
- D) Resolution #R2016-03-03 Authorizing the Transfer of Title of 1104 Dillon Avenue, a single-family dwelling and the Title of 302 West Fourth Street, a two-family dwelling from the City of Sterling to Rock Island Economic Growth Corporation**
- E) Partial Pay Request #10 to Martin & Company Excavating in the amount of \$43,097.80 for work on the riverfront under the Illinois Green Infrastructure and Mud-to-Parks Grants

The motion was seconded by Alderman Martin. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Conklin, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Stauter, and Wilen. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Attorney Coplan reported that he received an email from NICOR regarding the utility tax and would discuss that with the Mayor and Manager following the meeting.

Alderman Schuchard asked what was happening with the big trucks for Michael Knight that were in town over the weekend. Lt. Mohr stated that Rock Falls had some issues and asked them to leave unapproved locations. Mayor Lee stated that discussions have started on solicitors in Sterling.

Alderman Elston asked when yard waste collection would resume. March 14. She also asked about the building demolition in the 1100 block of East Fourth Street. Superintendent Schmidt is unsure of future plans for that lot. Alderman Conklin asked if asbestos abatement took place in that building. Schmidt reported that it was and additional asbestos was located in the wall cavities.

At 7:01 pm, Mayor Lee adjourned the regular meeting to a study session for budget review.

Manager Shumard reviewed the revenues and proposed capital expenditures. Superintendent Schmidt explained that they are planning to purchase the light poles for Douglas Park and have an electrical contractor install them so that maybe Commonwealth Edison will expedite this project.

Alderman Elston expressed concern about the loose roofing on the Lawrence Brothers building. Manager Shumard explained the City went after the building when it became an abandoned property and the roofing will be secured.

Alderman Stauter asked which residential City blocks would be reconstructed this year. Manager Shumard was unsure how far the money would go. Alderman Martin explained the rating system that the City uses to prioritize streets that will be reconstructed but added that this list can change if we have a partnership with the state or water company which extends our funding. Manager Shumard reported the City usually does 15 to 20 residential City blocks annually.

Alderman Conklin asked about the roof repairs on this building. Superintendent Schmidt stated there are leaks, especially above the old Council Chambers.

Manager Shumard finished review of the Band Commission, Library, and Mud-to-Parks Grant.

Manager Shumard asked the Council for any thoughts on the Strategic Plan. Shumard noted that the leaning lamp posts will be taken out of Grandon. Mayor Lee will talk with the Band Commission to pursue funding for the projects at Grandon.

Manager Shumard noted the Fung Ming building will be demolished for approximately \$160,000 to \$190,000 not including asbestos abatement to provide single-level parking.

Alderman Conklin asked about the War Memorial that was once planned to be a part of the Grandon Center. Mayor Lee stated there are problems with it at Grandon because it would take up seating space during events in the park.

Manager Shumard reported Rock Island Growth still plans to start work at the Lawrence Building in April.

Alderman Stauter still wanted numbers on the Best Cobb building for demolition, moving, selling, or repairing.

Alderman Martin thanked the department heads for their hard work on the budget. He was concerned about the sign at Public Works for \$2800. Martin would rather see a message board. Superintendent Schrader stated that he has two other sign bids. An electronic message board would be in excess of \$10,000. Martin's second concern was the City Management Intern. He does not feel an Intern is a necessity this year with the increased tax levy and the implementation of the utility tax. Mayor Lee thinks it is more effective to have a management intern for a reasonable price. Alderman Martin asked that a job description be prepared and Alderman Stauter asked for reports.

Manager Shumard stated any further budget questions can be presented at the March 21 meeting. The budget will be placed on display March 25.

Alderman Wilen asked where Vern Gottel's pay comes from and what does he do? Manager Shumard stated that Gottel has not received a paycheck since last summer. Gottel oversees special projects, such as the riverfront project. Mayor Lee stated that Gottel have been more like a consultant. Manager Shumard stated that Gottel's salary is divided between two departments and is only budgeted for \$12,000 next year. Mayor Lee stated Gottel has been a good resource.

Alderman Wilen asked about the contract with Hummel. Manager Shumard has not been in contact with Hummel.

Alderman Conklin asked about the rental inspection program. Manager Shumard stated Sterling wanted to work this program with Rock Falls. Because we are not home-rule, we cannot license but we can register the rentals. Shumard reported the state's proposal for home-rule in communities over 5000 in populations would help us greatly. Alderman Martin does not want to proceed with the rental program until we are sure about the manpower to complete the job and the rating system is fair across the board; he wants it done right if we start it. Superintendent Schmidt stated that it would be easier if Rock Falls was on board with the program.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm.

Marie Rombouts
City Clerk