

Mayor Diana Merdian called the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 pm on Monday, August 7, 2023. Roll call. Present: Aldermen Retha Elston, Joe Strabala-Bright(Zoom), Josh Johnson, Joseph Martin and Jim Wise. Absent: Alderman Kaitlyn Ekquist.

Also attending were City Attorney Tim Zollinger, City Manager Scott Shumard, Police Chief Alex Chavira, Fire Chief Michael Dettman, Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt (Zoom), Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader and City Clerk Teri Sathoff.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Mathew Enoch Mount addressed the Council on behalf of Monsignor Jean NDJEWEL, Archbishop Mediator Dei, General Superior of the Stevenist Missionary Order. Mr. Mount read a letter in regards to establishing a partnership between their institution and the American public or organizations working in health, education, agriculture, livestock and fish farming.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- A. Approval of Minutes.
- B. Approval of Bills and Payroll.
- C. Resolution No. 2023-08-21 Authorizing Letter of Non-objection to Whiteside County Relating to Subdivision Platt Approval at 13420 Galt Road.
- D. Pay Request #3 for Wallace Street to Gensini Excavation Inc. in the amount of \$601,676.35.
- E. Open Door Community Church request to waive rental fees to utilize Grandon Civic Center on August 20, 2023.
- F. Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois Troop 150 to hold a Bucket Brigade on August 12, 2023.
- G. Request to block off the road between Douglas Drive and Chestnut Avenue to host a neighborhood Back to School Block Party.

Seconded by Alderman Martin. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Martin and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Presentation of Resolution 2023-05-14 Honoring Charles "Skip" Lee for his Distinguished Service to the City of Sterling. On May 1, 2023, the City Council authorized a Resolution honoring Charles "Skip" Lee for his years of service to the community as Mayor, Alderman and so much more. Due to an illness Mayor Lee was unable to receive the Resolution that night. Mayor Merdian presented Lee with the resolution and thanked him for his service to the citizens.

Alderman Johnson made a motion to Waive Bid Process and Accept Proposal from NuToys in the amount of \$353,985 for Playground Equipment at the Riverfront Park; Seconded by Alderman Elston. Alderman Elston asked the size of the playground area, Mark Sauer with Meade and Hunt stated it is 12,000 square feet. City Manager Shumard clarified the “poured in place” rubberized coating is not included in the bid. Alderman Wise thanked Kris Noble for the focus groups and for including the sensory area. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Martin and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Elston made a motion to Waive Bid Process and Accept Proposal from Kompan in the amount of \$102,952.85 for Playground Equipment at the Riverfront Park; Seconded by Alderman Martin. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Martin and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Elston made a motion to Ordinance 2023-08-14 Amending Provisions relating to Electronic Messaging Signs; Seconded by Alderman Wise. Alderman Wise asked if the City has control over the messaging content of the signs or if they are protected by the First Amendment. Attorney Zollinger stated the First Amendment does protect the message content even if the message is inappropriate or vulgar. Alderman Wise stated he hopes the businesses will keep their messages business related. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Martin and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Wise made a motion to Award bid to Stichter Construction for removal of the structure at 612 West 3rd Street in the amount of \$13,967.00; Seconded by Alderman Elston. Alderman Wise stated he would like to see the property to be used as a park to display art from local artists. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Martin and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Chief Chavira reported two new officers have been hired and will be starting the academy on August 21, 2023. The officers should be on their own by the spring of 2024, this leaves two openings. Curls with Cops will be held on August 26, 2023 at Challand Middle School, it is a two-hour workout everyone is welcome to join. Chavira stated National Night Out, Hot Dog Days and Stock the Squad were all a success, he thanked everyone that assisted with all of the events. Chavira thanked Deputy Chief Mohr and CSO Martin for the putting together the National Night out and organizing the sponsors. Chavira thanked City Manager Shumard and City Clerk Sathoff for the movie in the park following National Night Out.

Chief Chavira also reported evidence clerk, Maureen Frankfother will be retiring. Chavira stated Frankfother has been with the City since 1985, she has seen a lot of changes in laws as well as staff. The new laws required a lot of learning and changes in process for her, her job has not

always been the easiest. Chavira thanked her for her years of service to the police department. There will be a gathering on Friday August 11th at 9:00 am in the police training room.

Chief Dettman thanked Chief Chavira for including the Fire Department in the National Night Out, it was a great public education event. Dettman reported all of the floors at the main station have been resurfaced with the exception of the wet room. He also stated the newest firefighter started the academy last week. There is still one opening, testing for that will be done on Saturday.

Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader stated they are finishing the dirt work and seeding at Tori Pines. The Pavilion at Platt Park has been started, the footings have been poured. The landscaping behind Grummert's and at Grandon has been completed. Whiteside County has been striping the lines on all of the main roads.

Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt gave an update on the buildings that were damaged by fire on East 3rd Street. Two of the buildings are close to being under contract for demolition. The insurance companies are slowing the process down.

City Clerk Teri Sathoff stated she is hoping to have another movie in the park early this fall and start the movies again next year in the spring.

Attorney Zollinger thanked Chief Chavira for his great cooking skills on hot dog days.

City Manager Shumard reported Surf Broadband was planning on hanging more of their lines on Com-Ed poles, they have run into permission issues so they will be running their wires under ground again. Shumard stated that Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt, Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader and he met with Larry Ybarra, he will be petitioning the City Council with zoning changes to in regards to the multiuse sports park he has been planning.

City Manager Shumard stated that Matt Hansen with Willett Hofmann is in the chambers, Mr. Hansen assisted the City in receiving a \$9.6 million loan for relining 38,000 feet of sewer lining, \$2.9 million of this loan is forgivable and the interest rate is 1.36%. Hansen stated this will reline two of the main trunk lines as well as all of the lines that are tributaries to the lift station on Freeport Road. Hansen said this area is low and very wet that so it sees excess flow.

Alderman Elston commented on all of the activities that were held last week, National Night Out, the last band concert and Hot Dog Days. Elston reminded everyone about the pop-up market on Thursday. Elston thanked the Chamber for the steak dinner fundraiser, Kris Noble stated the

desert auction raised \$43,000. The ticket sales and sponsorships cover the overhead so the desert auction money goes directly to the scholarships.

Alderman Wise commended Janna Groharing for the cruise night, Rally on the Rock. He stated he hopes to see it return next year.

Mayor Merdian thanked everyone for the work they did over the last week it was very busy and was a great week. Mayor Merdian stated a member of the Municipal Band composed a march dedicated to the City of Sterling, she stated the composition is a beautiful work of art and we are fortunate to have received it.

At 7:20pm, Alderman Johnson made a motion to move to Executive Session, Provisions of 5ILCS 120/2(c)(5) specifically provide for a closed session to discuss the purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body; seconded by Alderman Wise. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Martin and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

At 8:22pm, Alderman Johnson made a motion to return to open session; seconded by Alderman Elston. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Johnson, Martin and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm.

Teri Sathoff

City Clerk