

Mayor Charles "Skip" Lee called a meeting of the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 pm on Monday, March 6, 2017. Roll call. Present: Aldermen Bob Conklin, Retha Elston, Joe Martin, Christopher Schuchard, John Stauter, and Christine Wilen. Absent: None.

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Alex Finke, with Illinois Realtors, thanked the City Council for taking the sales tax question to the referendum. The Council is being responsible by looking for other sources of revenue, aside from property taxes. Finke stated that Manager Shumard was the best manager he has worked with.

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

- A) Minutes from March 6, 2017
- B) Bills and Payroll totaling \$541,202.15
- C) Plan Commission Minutes of February 16, 2017
- D) **Resolution #R2017-03-02 Authorizing the Sale of Fire Department Surplus Property** – equipment to be donated to the Illinois Fire Museum in Marengo, Illinois
- E) Change Order #1 in the amount of \$1,500.00 to the contract to demolish a single-family dwelling and detached garage at 208 West 7th Street
- F) Refer Petition to Plan Commission from Marv and Karen Lofgren to vacate 25' of right-of-way in the 300 block of East 23<sup>rd</sup> Street
- G) Refer Petition to Plan Commission from Heath Warner and 14 East Third Street, LLC to rezone property at 2501 Avenue E from NB-Neighborhood Business to NB Special Use to allow for the operation of a sit-down restaurant and pub
- H) Refer Petition to Plan Commission from WC-Sterling LLC for a Special Use, Planned Unit Development and Subdivision Concept Plan on property commonly known as Coventry Village

The motion was seconded by Alderman Martin. Alderman Stauter asked for clarification on the change order for the demolition and the value of the surplus items from the Fire Department. The Change Order was to remove two trees at the site and the surplus items have no monetary value. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Stauter, and Wilen. Nays – None. Abstain – Alderman Conklin. Motion carried.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve Mayor Lee's reappointment of Marie Rombouts to the Fire Pension Board for a three-year term to expire June 30, 2020; seconded by Alderman Wilen. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Conklin, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Stauter, and Wilen. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Manager Shumard reviewed changes to the Consolidated Dispatch Intergovernmental Agreement. The primary changes are that Whiteside County will be the employer and it be housed in the Sterling Coliseum. Employees from Rock Falls, Sterling and CGH will be brought in based on years of service, accrued sick leave, and vacation time. Employees will be able to carry over up to 400 hours of sick time. One of Sterling's employees has 900 hours and it has not been considered how this can be compensated. Distribution of call volume has not been determined. Call volume will be re-evaluated after six months. The agreement has not named IMRF or SLEP as the retirement plan to be used.

The Council expressed concern of the position of Whiteside County and Rock Falls on the agreement. Attorney Zollinger stated the agreement was on the County's Agenda for Tuesday. The agreement is not in force until all three parties are in agreement.

Manager Shumard reviewed the proposition of the Deputy Police Chief position. Shumard explained the Lieutenant positions are based on oral and written exams. The Chief would have more authority to appoint officers that share his vision with a good work ethic and administrative leadership. There would be no change in pay. An officer with five years of service in Sterling would be eligible. There would be only one Deputy Chief if there are less than 25 officers and two Deputy Chiefs if there are more than 25 officers. If the numbers fall below 25, one Deputy Chief would assume the rank he had before appointment. Currently, the Fire Police Commission tests and interviews for the position of Lieutenant. There is little input from the Chief.

Alderman Schuchard was concerned about favoritism. Attorney Zollinger stated the Council can repeal the ordinance at any time.

Manager Shumard outlined the need for the Local Option Sales Tax. The referendum question is on the ballot for April 4, 2017. The City of Sterling is proposing an additional ½% sales tax increase to support needed infrastructure work. The first concern is Stormwater Management; the second is Overlay and Resurfacing Streets. Estimated annual revenue would be \$1,175,000. The sales tax would not be applied to medicine, groceries, or automobiles.

Alderman Martin stated the low interest rates on bonds are fading which will add to the cost. Stormwater fees are not attractive. Sterling has used the ½% for streets since its inception in 2004. The need for stormwater management is critical.

Mayor Lee reminded everyone the sales tax will affect everyone who buys merchandise in Sterling, not just Sterling residents.

Alderman Schuchard made a motion to set the public hearing for the 2017-2018 budget at the 6:30 pm meeting on Monday, April 3, 2017; seconded by Alderman Conklin. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Conklin, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Stauter, and Wilen. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Mike Mudge with Rock River Energy presented updated numbers for the community aggregation. Mudge recommended Dynergy Energy with a one year rate of 6.777¢. Mudge recommends to contract for only one year because next year he may be able to group several communities together for better aggregation rates. This contract will be renewed in June. The current contract expires in August. The current Commonwealth Edison (ComEd) rate is 6.31¢ and next year is anticipated to be 6.9¢ to 7.0¢. Mayor Lee confirmed that opt-out letters would be sent after ComEd rates are announced.

Mudge explained that Rock River Energy is happy to do business with Sterling. There are other companies that do this job but they were the first in the area to help build and consolidate communities. Rock River Energy has great support staff and can help with any questions. Mudge announced that their customers will be receiving a placard for their doors that state "No solicitors invited".

Alderman Martin made a motion to approve Dynergy Energy for a one year contract to supply energy for residential and small commercial in the amount of 6.777¢ per kilowatt hour; seconded by Alderman Schuchard. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Conklin, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Stauter, and Wilen. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Mike Mudge presented the Council with two bids for the dusk to dawn street lighting. Mudge recommended to lock the rate in for three years.

Alderman Schuchard made a motion to approve the bid from Constellation in the amount of 3.131¢ per kilowatt hour for a three-year contract; seconded by Alderman Stauter. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Conklin, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Stauter, and Wilen. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Martin made a motion to approve **Resolution #R2017-03-03 Asking for IEPA Assistance with the Lawrence Brothers/Hardware Building**; seconded by Alderman Wilen. Manager Shumard explained this resolution is asking Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) for assistance and participation to resolve the environmental investigation of the Lawrence Brothers/Hardware Building. Mayor Lee added that this is a way to begin solidifying costs. Nothing can be done or funds expended without Council action. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Conklin, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Stauter, and Wilen. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve **Ordinance #2017-03-03 Vacating A Portion of Commerce Drive and Consenting to a Replat of Lots 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 into Lot 1 of Halo Re-Subdivision of the Meadowlands Business Park**; seconded by Alderman Martin. Manager Shumard explained the ordinance joins six lots and vacates the end of a cul-de-sac (Commerce Drive). Greater Sterling Development Commission Director Heather Sotelo reported this is a big accomplishment for Sterling. HALO will be adding 250 jobs, doubling their workforce. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Conklin, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Stauter, and Wilen. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Sauk Valley Area Chamber Director Kris Noble announced a candidate night on Tuesday, March 28, 2017 at 6:30 pm at Woodlawn Arts Academy. All candidates from contested races are invited. There will be media coverage.

Alderman Wilen stated that City crews helped resolve problems in her neighborhood.

Alderman Martin reported that yard waste is being collected. There was a misinterpretation the first week but everything is going smoothly now.

Mayor Lee expressed condolences to Alderman Schuchard on the passing of his grandfather at the age of 99.

Alderman Schuchard made a motion to move to "closed session" at 8:19 pm to discuss appointment, employment, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the public body as covered under subsection (1) of 5 ILCS 120/2(c) and collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives under subsection (2) of 5 ILCS 120/2(c); seconded by Alderman Martin. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Conklin, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Stauter, and Wilen. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Schuchard made a motion to reconvene the open meeting at 9:59 pm; seconded by Alderman Stauter. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Conklin, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Stauter, and Wilen. Nays – None. Motion carried.

The regular meeting was adjourned to a budget study session at 10:00 pm.

Manager Shumard reviewed the following budgets:

- Library
- Health Insurance –increase, hoping three large insurance claims are under control next year.
- General Fund – now reflects capital items moved into this year.

- Sewer Fund – dredging may be delayed for another year. Working on an alternative to decrease the need for dredging.

On March 24 the budget will be displayed. A public hearing will be held on April 3 with adoption on April 17.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:17 pm.

Marie Rombouts  
City Clerk