

Minutes of the General Government and Public Safety Committee for Monday, June 8, 2009.

The meeting was called to order by Alderman Orsini at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Grenke, Aldermen Hensley, Simmons, Million, and Bormann. Also attending were Lynn Behrns, Fire Chief Marvin Rodgers, James Lee, Police Chief Larry Dudgeon, Don Bagley, Rita Gosney, Judy Reece, April Wilson, Ginny Zoellers, Jennette Skirvin, Greg Grenke, James Smith and others.

Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Alliance.

Fire Department

Rodgers presented a report of Fire Department activities in May. The Department accomplished two training sessions with the Boone County Fire Protection District involving live structure fire events. On the 23rd and 29th of this month, there will be sessions to practice car extrication. Junk cars are to be taken to the asphalt mixing table near the dog pound. One firefighter has recently resigned. Only one applicant has expressed interest, but he works away from the City during the daytime.

Rodgers again noted that Dr. Womack, the Medical Director for the Boone County Fire Protection District, had agreed to serve as medical director for the Centralia firefighters. Womack has indicated that he wished to be sure he was covered by the City's liability insurance. Behrns said he has discussed this with Jed Angell and is recommending that the Mayor formally appoint Dr. Womack to be Centralia's EMS Medical Director for when they are responding to emergency situations in support of the District's EMS personnel. Lee said that arrangements have been made for responder immunizations. Most of them will be given without charge to the City. Lee also said that work is continuing on how best for Joint Communications to call out Centralia firefighters for emergency medical incidents and transmit information to the Centralia dispatchers.

City Prosecutor

April Wilson gave an update on her activities, and introduced herself to newer aldermen who have never met her in person. She described the half-day training sessions she is giving to police officers, particularly focusing on rules of evidence and recent court rulings. The sessions are usually held every other month. Dudgeon said the training and municipal court is going "swimmingly". Wilson noted that municipal court is handling fewer minor cases. The police department is making more arrests for serious crimes, which are often handled by the county prosecutor's office.

Police Department

Committee recognized Reece and Gosney. They both spoke about concerns of cars speeding near the 400 block of S. Rollins. Reece also noted that one of her neighbors was allegedly involved with marijuana and items had been stolen from yards in the neighborhood. Committee discussed at length possible causes and public attitudes. Dudgeon said he had instituted several targeted measures for the area. Behrns noted that Reece and Gosney were acting just like an active neighborhood watch, notifying the Police immediately of suspicious activities and crime.

Chief Dudgeon presented a report of Police Department activities in May

Dudgeon said he has spoken to Chris Noblett of MoDOT. He, Noblett and a traffic engineer from Norfolk Southern will be meeting on site on Thursday to discuss the best and safest way to control and sign traffic at the intersection of Lakeview Street and Columbia Street near the COLT Railroad.

As he had promised, Behrns relayed a citizen complaint to the effect that there were too many steps increasing and decreasing speed limits on Highway 22. The citizen had received a ticket for driving faster than the limit because it had been decreased behind where he entered the highway, was stopped, and issued a citation. Behrns noted that the increments were according to a MoDOT study and intended to avoid drastic breaking for persons not familiar with the City.

Behrns said that he had driven Denton Street at night and found most on-street parking occurred on the east side of the street. Limiting parking on the west side might not be a problem. However, to do so might tempt traffic to drive faster and lower safety rather than improve it. Narrow streets are commonly accepted as traffic calming measures. The matter was deferred until Alderman Parmeley could be present.

Dudgeon told the Committee that he and his consultant are proceeding with a grant application to fund a radio repeater for Police and for improvements to the base at the dispatch office. The grant would be near the cap of \$10,000. If this is turned down, they will submit to a second grant program and try again.

Dudgeon discussed policing during the Anchor Festival and was satisfied on how events occurred. He was very proud and thankful of the cooperation and assistance from the Highway Patrol and Sheriff's office. Bormann asked about increased dog control at future events. This is an item to be discussed by the Chambers of Commerce and the Police Department. Committee members complimented Dudgeon on a smooth operation during the Festival.

Dudgeon noted Patrol Officer De Long and Dispatcher Becker will be attending training on the 18th and 19th of this month.

Emergency Management

No formal report. No appointment has been made yet to replace James McNabb as head of Joint Dispatch and County EMS Director. The City is waiting and will likely mirror the Boone County/City of Columbia selection to be EMS Director for Centralia.

Protective Inspection

Although he has been told that a sale is near for the Redwood Motel (which has been issued a dangerous structure notice), Behrns is proceeding with the designated procedure. As soon as he and Mayor Grenke can determine a proper date and time, a second notice will be mailed to 4355 Fruitland LLC and will stipulate a hearing before the Mayor to determine if Behrns' designation is correct and the described demolition should proceed. The hiring can be called off if the property is sold. The likely buyer has already told the City of his desire to demolish most of the buildings on the site.

Behrns has prepared notices for again designating the Naragansett Building to be a dangerous structure. He has found that the property has an outstanding mortgage on it. Notices must also be sent to mortgage holder.

Behrns said that the recent focus has been mowing high vegetation in advance of Anchor Festival. The City had to mow several properties, and bills have been sent to the owners. The owner of one of these properties on South Allen is apparently seeking a contractor to remove the old house on it.

Economic Development

Ginny Zoellers presented a report of recent Chamber of Commerce and economic development activities. She described in detail the cooperation between the Chamber and Boone County Hospital targeted to securing a full-time doctor for the Centralia Clinic. The hospital is committed to the Clinic. It is staffed by several part-timers in the interim, but candidates have visited Centralia and been impressed. One recent event has been a help: designation of the Clinic as a rural provider. This allows for greater federal medicare reimbursement rates and can allow for a high forgiveness of some student loans.

Zoellers described this year's Anchor Festival as "huge". A debriefing meeting will be held on the evening of June 23 in the council chambers of City Hall. Issues to be discussed will include dog control, sitting of the archery contest, and room for larger car shows.

Zoellers said that the prospective business she mentioned last month is now situated and running.

Behrns reported that Fay's law offices are relocating to larger space in the south half of Dave Holsinger's building. The local McDonald's has a new owner, who seems to be community oriented.

Mayor Grenke spoke as to how proud he was of the new Recreation Center and how well received it was. It is truly an asset for all of northern Boone County and area north.

Park Department

Minutes of previous meeting of the Park Board has been distributed. The Park Board will next meet on June 16.

Committee spoke of the contributions of the Enlow's to the Park Department and to bringing the Recreation Center to fruition. Some sort of recognition is appropriate, as it is for the Optimists and the Friends of the Park.

Orsini mentioned concerns about graffiti at park shelter houses. Committee discussed more cameras tied into the system in the Recreation Center. Behrns said that this approach might have to be deferred until the Recreation Center construction bills are all accounted, and Park finances are determined to be on track.

Cemetery Advisory Committee

The minutes for a committee meeting on May 16 are included in the agenda packet. The count for flags in the Avenue of Flags is up to 303.

Mayor Grenke noted that the Advisory Committee will be discussing a possible reorientation of the VFW's memorial monument to make it more readable.

Tree Board

There was no written report. Mayor Grenke said he would be reappointing two members of the Tree Board whose terms were expiring. Orsini suggested that they be asked to make a report to the Aldermen now and then.

Library Board

Library Board minutes from its May meeting have been previously distributed. Bormann noted that the house south of the Library had been demolished. The appearance of the entire Library block seems improved. Zoellers said she thought the Library's book sale at Anchor Festival had been a success.

Finance

Financial statements for May (and April) are still not completed. Incomplete reports may be in the council packets. Full reports will be available after the audit is complete and year end rollovers are done.

Preliminary bills over \$1,250 were presented. Committee had no questions.

Other General Government

No items to discuss.

As May Arise

Behrns asked if aldermen had completed their suggestions for street asphalt overlays. He said that he would like to go to bid before oil price increases affected paving costs. None of the aldermen had lists ready, although Simmons said she thought that the short section of Whitman between Adams and Sunset should be fixed. After a short discussion, committee members agreed with the suggestion that staff should take the items not funded from last year's short list and then add Whitman and continue on in priority order on the designations from last year as far as financing will go. Behrns will prepare such a list and distribute it to the Board for final approval.

Mayor Grenke raised the recurring concern of where truck parking could be accomplished. Behrns related that the last time the Board had considered this, a private property owner had rented open property for such parking. It had been little used, because truck drivers did not want to pay, but did want lights and security and, in some cases, electric outlets for engine heaters. Grenke said he might contact the owners of the former Dairy Queen. That property is well lit and properly zoned. Orsini suggested that the City might also eliminate some ditches and consider on-street truck parking on Switzler.

The Committee then adjourned at about 8:40 p.m.