

Minutes of the General Government and Public Safety Committee for Monday, August 10, 2009.

The meeting was called to order by Alderman Orsini at 7:20 p.m. Present were Mayor Grenke, Aldermen Hensley, Simmons, Bormann, and Parmeley. Also attending were Lynn Behrns, Fire Chief Marvin Rodgers, James Lee, Police Chief Larry Dudgeon, Kathy Colvin, Linda Bormann, Don Bobbitt, Donna Jenkins, Clifford de la Rosa, Darryl Spauldin, Creig Anderson, Gary Woolfolk, James Smith, and others.

Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Alliance.

Comments from Citizens

Donna Jenkins addressed the Committee. She suggested that they create a new committee to help home owners who are elderly and or have limited financial or physical resources with yard work, small repairs, painting, winterization, and general upkeep. The aldermen engaged in an extended discussion. Orsini suggested Jenkins contact the Boone County Agency on Aging. Zoellers suggested the Volunteer Action Agency. Working from his computer, Mayor Grenke found and wrote down several possible contacts. Behrns mentioned an informal group under Rev. White which had tried to coordinate volunteer helpers for winterization projects to help residents cope with increased utility rates. But the group found limited interest from volunteers or applicants. Rev. White might be persuaded to try again. Several local groups have been involved in similar efforts in past: Kiwanis, Rotary, VFW, and particularly the Ministerial Alliance.

City Prosecutor

No report to present.

Fire Department

Chief Rodgers presented a report of Fire Department activities in July. The department had no fire calls. Meetings were held for training and for inspection of all hoses and trucks. One session was for joint training on a "shooter" exercise at the high school. Next week a five-evening series of classes in hazmat response is scheduled.

Mayor questioned Rodgers about the age of the fire department trucks and whether an old truck from Eldon would be useful if bought for a price of about \$6,000. He was told that it was not much younger than most of our trucks, Behrns has information from the Centralia department to allow him to search for funding for a replacement tanker. He would hope to use money in the Fire Equipment Fund as a match. He is particularly examining a grant that will be available next spring.

Rodgers and Scott Olsen are to meet and discuss draft protocols for joint emergency responses involving the City Fire Department and the Boone County Fire Protection District.

Police Department

Chief Dudgeon presented a report of Police Department activities in July

Orsini comment that a drug bust over weekend was a "good collar". Mayor noted that the Police Department is doing an outstanding job.

Behrns distributed a draft ordinance which would change the Personnel Code to lengthen the standard probationary period for police officers from six months to one year. Dudgeon recommends the change because he believes that a longer time is needed for officers to be completely tested and get familiar with the City "on the ground". The change would apply only to police officers, who will still get a step increase and be enrolled in LAGERS after six months. Committee agreed to place the ordinance on the next Board agenda

Behrns introduced discussion of a suggestion from Don Bagley at a previous meeting. Bagley asked the City to increase the cost of having pets which are not spayed or neutered or for reclaiming such pets from the pound. Such a policy is partially in effect already for cats. Behrns was asked to contact Bagley to see if he has a particular municipal law in mind as an example. Behrns is also supposed to see if strays are a particular problem, or just escaped pets. How many of those caught by the Code Enforcement Officer are feral?

Behrns asked for guidance concerning traffic calming on S Collier and S. Rollins. Dudgeon said he had talked to a few particular individuals and thought the problem was addressed. Committee members disagreed. After discussion, Committee directed Behrns to put "experimental" stop signs at the intersections of those streets and Bruton Street and observe the results. Hensley said law enforcement needs to pay particular attention to the elementary school area. Dudgeon noted that he must be careful in the allocation of limited resources.

Behrns told Committee of a similar request from Jackiesue Ericson Morris. She had asked for a stop sign on Head Street at Walnut. She cited a problem when ball games are over and teams exited the City Recreation Park in a frisky manner. Committee told Behrns to study the situation for now.

Emergency Management

No formal report.

Protective Inspection

Mayor recognized Clifford de la Rosa, who had disputed a dangerous structure notice about the old Naragansett Building. De la Rosa said he is being singled out and other structures were being ignored. Behrns made and distributed copies of the notice in question. The particulars were read by Orsini. Anderson questioned building inspection; Spauldin questioned Behrns' qualification. De la Rosa would like to meet with Orsini and others to look at building on Thursday evening. Orsini agreed. Anderson request a time to meet with Mayor without presence of Behrns. Behrns advised the Mayor to be cautious, in that he might later be acting in the capacity of a judge, if the matter goes to an evidentiary hearing.

Behrns reported sale of the Redwood Motel did not close. He asked Mayor Grenke for a new date to set a hearing with Derrick Benton, principal of the owner--4455 Fruitland LLC.

Behrns said that he has been told that news on the CDBG grant request for demolition of 105 N. Allen may happen in the next two weeks. He is hopeful.

Committee discussion of other buildings which could be issued dangerous structure or nuisance notices.

Economic Development

Ginny Zoellers resented a report of recent Chamber of Commerce and economic development activities:

A quarterly membership meeting will occur on Friday at noon to discuss how small businesses are affected by ADA regulations. Speakers will distinguish between what must be done and what would be good to do. A ribbon cutting for Little Sprouts is scheduled for August 21st. This new business is already successful, but has limited room to expand.

Zoellers has requested the SBA initiate a workshop for startup small businesses. They have not responded, but help has been promised from a First Missouri Bank development expert. Zoellers will run an ad to gauge interest and potential attendance.

Zoellers described a meeting with Virgil Rains, which came at the suggestion of the Mayor. Rains has much experience with workforce development, which is a major component of business retention and economic development. Rains agreed to help steer a reformed Economic Development Committee of the Chamber of Commerce. Other people have been invited, including representatives of Boone County, the Centralia School District and local financial and industrial firms. Target date for the meeting is August 27th.

Zoellers distributed final financial statements for this year's Anchor Festival.

Behrns said he received copies of a report from employees of the State and the Mid-Missouri Regional Planning Commission. They have been studying the historic character of Centralia's downtown and how it might be leveraged into tax credits for business which engage in improvement/preservation.

Woolfolk said he has spoken to school officials about use of property south of the new Intermediate School for community gardens. Centralia's PTO is supportive. He also asked about the progress of creating a bike trail from Columbia to Centralia. Parmeley said funding depends on Columbia and the COLT Railroad. Such a project is not a priority item for them at the moment. Woolfolk suggested the City work now on how to run bike traffic over or around the Highway 124 overpass.

Park Department

Minutes of the previous meeting of the Park Board have been distributed. The Park Board will next meet on August 18.

Cemetery Advisory Committee

There was no written report

Tree Board

There was no written report.

Library Board

Library Board minutes from its July meeting have been previously distributed.

Pat Olsen presented the annual report of Library District. Patronage is up noticeably. The recently purchase land adjacent to the library is needed for parking. She highlighted an important grant for

computers and an award as one of best libraries in the state. She is proud of the library's close ties to the local schools, and their joint lending program. She sees a bright future for the district, limited mostly by lack of its ability to grow its tax base to parallel growth of use.

Finance

Financial statements for July were distributed this afternoon. Behrns asked committee members to call if they had any comments or questions.

The preliminary list of bills over \$1,250 was presented. Committee had no questions.

Colvin reported that, with the approval of the auditor, she is making ACH payments for regular MISO bills and debt service obligations. This will be cheaper than the cost of special wire transfers. Two signatures on a voucher will be necessary; and she will run these payments through the City Treasurer, just like checks on our bank accounts. Behrns noted that the City will make monthly payments on the lease debt service for the new electric substation

Other General Government

Behrns asked about proceeding with adding gender identity to anti-discrimination provisions in the City Code. He said the Fair Housing chapter of the City Code needs to be updated on procedural grounds anyway. City Attorney Beck will draft an ordinance with those changes. Beck wants to know whether to expand the criteria to include gender identify and whether this should apply to just housing or should include the areas of employment and/or public accommodations and also how to handle the definition of gender identify. Orsini encouraged the aldermen to proceed and noted that any restrictions would not apply to religious organizations. She repeated that such an ordinance could make the City more attractive to high-tech firms looking to relocate. Parmeley said he was less sure of this, but such an ordinance was becoming more common. He and Orsini suggested that the example ordinance from University City would be a good place for the City Attorney to start and that it should apply to all three areas. Behrns thought that the draft ordinance would be ready for next month's meeting and an advertised hearing could be on the September Board agenda.

The ordinance authorizing approval of the settlement with AT&T/SBC Landline for past and future telecommunication taxes will be on the next Board agenda. That meeting will also have the required hearing on property tax rates and an ordinance to set the rates.

It has been two years since the last time the state-mandated financial disclosure ordinance was approved. An ordinance to re-adopt the same language will be on the next Board agenda.

Committee directed Behrns to ask the City of Columbia to proceed with drafting a contract for use of the COLT Railroad right-of-way to install one-half mile of new sidewalk. It will include an agreement to close the Sims Street railroad crossing to vehicular traffic (leaving only bicycles and pedestrian). The amount of usage of the street is far less than that of Bruton or Lakeview. As with past closings, Behrns believes that an ordinance directing the signing of the agreement with the railroad will be sufficient. A separate ordinance for vacating City right-of-way should not be necessary. Since the closing was not recommended by the Planning and Zoning Commission, an ordinance to sign the agreement would have to be approved by at least four aldermen (not a three-three tie broken by the Mayor). Bormann suggested that the agreement include language that directed the railroad to avoid passing through during the time around the opening and ending of the normal school day.

As May Arise

On behalf of a constituent, Bormann asked when or if Bradford Street would receive an overlay. Behrns said that the City had run through most of this year's available money, but a similar amount should be available next spring. Four streets will remain of those chosen as priorities and given a ranking by the Board of Aldermen from a longer list of needy streets. These remaining streets are Gano Chance east of Jefferson, all of Fairgrounds Street, Bradford Street (which could include Wilkins and the south 200 feet of Jenkins not paved this year), and the reconstruction of Rollins Street in front of the Chance Elementary School. Money in the Transportation Sales Tax Fund should allow for three of the four to be done.

The Committee then adjourned at about 9:45 p.m.

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