

Minutes of the General Government and Public Safety Committee for Monday, September 14, 2009.

The meeting was called to order by Alderman Orsini at 6:00 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, and James Smith. Alderman Million and Darryl Spaulding entered after the start of the meeting.

Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Alliance.

Economic Development

Ginny Zoellers was absent. Behrns resented a written report of recent Chamber of Commerce and economic development activities. He highlighted a reminder of the upcoming dedication of a monument by the Daughters of the Union Soldiers at the Centralia Battlefield on September 27. Mayor Grenke will give short remarks.

Mayor Grenke reported on meetings of the new Economic Development Advisory Committee and said the next meeting to be on Thursday, October 22. He asked that aldermen identify and bring to him the names of twenty or more business people who might be added to the committee.

Park Department

Minutes of the previous meeting of the Park Board have been distributed. The Park Board will next meet on September 15.

Behrns reported that, if the Park Board requests, the City may need to pass ordinances to authorize the Mayor to sign licensing agreements with ASCAP and BMI to allow recorded music to be played on the public address systems of the swimming pool, recreation center, and City Square.

Cemetery Advisory Committee

There was no written report

Tree Board

Behrns noted that a written report had been distributed with the agenda packets. Orsini said she was happy because they reported that the emerald ash borer was limited to only a few sites in eastern Missouri.

Library Board

Library Board minutes from the August meeting have been previously distributed. A copy of the Library's annual audit was also distributed.

Finance

Financial statements for August were distributed this afternoon. Behrns asked committee members to call if they had any comments or questions. Colvin said that she needs to make one small correction to the balance sheets to amend a close-out entry for the last fiscal year, but it will not make a difference to the City's financial picture.

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

Other General Government

Behrns brought up the set of four draft ordinances from the agenda packet, which would add new categories of persons to the list of protected classes in the Fair Housing Chapter of the City Code and would also make some discrimination in the areas of employment practices and public accommodations unlawful in the City Code. Of the ordinances, one would make certain changes to added disabled persons to the protected classes and change certain procedures to better protect due process. An alternative ordinance would do the same, but also add “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” to the classes. The other two ordinances would add new chapters to the City Code that parallel state or federal anti-discrimination laws in the areas of employment and public accommodations and have the full list of protected categories include disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity. The committee did not discuss the ordinances, but did direct Behrns to place an ad in the newspaper to set a public hearing on the draft ordinances for the regular Board meeting. Committee indicated that they would not be inclined to pass any of the ordinances through both required readings at the Monday meeting.

Colvin reported that the City’s large printer is failing. Replacement would cost about \$800. She has investigated and found that the new style of copiers could do the same work and fax and scan, all in one unit. She talked to Icon and found that the most recent state contract would allow us to change our present lease to one for the new style copier at a savings over what we now pay. There would also be a savings for toner costs for the printer. The electric department would have to relocate some phone and computer jackets, but the new machine could go in the same footprint. Committee discussed getting quotes from another supplier, but decided it was unlikely that a firm could beat the state contract price. Bidding independently would take more time than we have left with the printer. The aldermen were happy with the upgrade because several of them use the newer machines at their places of work and note the advantages.

Colvin said that the Chance Foundation had requested a page on the City’s web site to present information on the Centralia Battlefield and Civil War history. This and other information would parallel what is on other local sites. Colvin is working with the Chamber of Commerce and Library to coordinate responsibility over several types of information, including the Battlefield, community calendars, etc. The information will be clearly linked and easily identified from each web site. This can be done by local staff with venter charges.

Colvin said she is looking for photos to link to the “Slice of Centralia” button on the City’s Web Site. She may get use of photos from the school system, since these from class projects have written releases from the persons in the pictures. She will also talk to the Fireside Guard about using some of their pictures, which are taken in public areas. Appropriate credits will be used for the sources.

City Prosecutor

No report to present.

Fire Department

Chief Rodgers presented a report of Fire Department activities in August. Annual pump testing on the fire trucks will be conducted on Saturday. At least one truck will remain in town at all times. Rodgers told Orsini that “Special time” on the report accounted for EMS and Hazmat training. The Centralia firefighters have been responding to actual medical emergencies since September 1. Our firefighters have twice served as drivers for ambulance runs. For now, responses will be “all calls” for trained personnel until they become seasoned. Eventually there will be an on-call rotation. Lee noted our department’s expanded training and gave kudos to the Boone County Fire Protection District for working smoothly with us.

Bormann asked about new department recruits. Rodgers said they are looking at only one, but he is not in town during the daytime. He received committee okay to add such persons to fill the old roster, but not to be part of the eight slots added especially for daytime work. Recruiting such persons is proving very hard.

Police Department

Chief Dudgeon presented a report of Police Department activities in August

Dudgeon is amending a state grant application to file before September 18. The grant should then be a sure thing and give us \$9,103.05 to fund a new repeater radio. The money should be on hand in just a few weeks.

Hensley told committee that the new stop signs are making residents on Collier and Rollins happy. Whether speeding is less is hard to determine.

Behrns noted receipt of a request for a stop sign at Locust and Allen. This is a different circumstance, but a citizen reports children frequently walking in the roadway. The aldermen will view the site and discuss at the next committee meeting.

Behrns note that three ordinances had been written for discussion and possible addition to the City Code. They make certain types of harassment, driving with a revoked license, and failure to appear for municipal court to be City misdemeanor offenses. The driving ordinance still needs discussion between staff and the City Prosecutor. All three will be on the regular Board Agenda.

The Police Department is contemplating a schedule with ten-hour shifts for officers. Such a schedule would inappropriately inflate overtime hours, unless the City adopts a two-week pay period for the officers. This is allowed under the Fair Labor Standards Act, but would require changes to the Personnel Code. Other small changes may also be necessary to keep benefits cost at about the same level as present. An ordinance is being prepared for the regular agenda.

One police reserve officer will probably be going to the Sheriff's Department and would end his availability to the City. Dudgeon does believe this will affect our schedule.

Emergency Management

The Local Emergency Planning Committee will have a table top exercise at City Hall on Tuesday. We will host about twenty persons, including employees of MFA, and discuss possible responses to an anhydrous ammonia leak that requires evacuation.

Protective Inspection

City Attorney Beck does not recommend a written contract in the case of Clifford de la Rosa and repairs to the Narragansett Building. We would instead, verbally consent to a proposed time schedule, and not issue any notice for a hearing before the Mayor unless de la Rosa does not comply with his own suggestions. Aldermen reserved final agreement until they see the revised times and until de la Rosa consents to City inspections to assure progress.

Four other dangerous structure notices have been recently mailed, some work has already started. The hearing on the Redwood Motel property has again been indefinitely postponed because the sale closing is scheduled for Friday. The new owner is aware of the declaration. Spaulding asked about citing the old seed elevators and particularly the scales in Hickman Street. Behrns said that some objectionable items are not

safety issues. He is researching the removal of the scales. He agreed to ask the State Department of Agriculture about a possible explosive dust hazard researching. Plants growing on the roofs not really a violation of the City Code.

As May Arise

Behrns reported that he has not yet received the expected contract to allow sidewalks on COLT Railroad right-of-way.

Behrns passed out draft copies of the next newsletter for proofreading and comments by the aldermen. We will go to press before the end of the week.

Information on a meeting of the Central Region of the Missouri Municipal League was distributed. The meeting will be in Fulton on October 22. Behrns and Mayor Grenke cannot attend because of scheduling conflicts.

Behrns reported that a City dump truck used to carry lime to a temporary storage site had slid into a lagoon of the sewer treatment plant. The driver was not injured, but the truck was totally submerged. The truck is now out and a claims adjuster should look at it this week.

The Committee then adjourned at about 7:05 p.m.