

MEETING MINUTES
Monday, January 25, 2021
5:00 pm

Mayor Judge brought the City Council meeting to order.

Present on Roll Call: Mayor Joe Judge Commissioners – Eric Ikemire,
Justin Dugar, Chandler Madden

Also, Present: City Administrative Assistant Rudy Witsman, City Attorney Brady Waldrop

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Judge requested a motion to approve the minutes of the last council meeting.

Commissioner Ikemire motioned and Commissioner Dugar seconded to approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 11, 2021. All present voted Aye by voice vote.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS

Mayor Judge acknowledged Water/Sewer Maintenance Lead Operator Bill Reed, who formally announced his retirement after forty-six years of employment with the city and stated his last day to work will be March 31st, 2021. Bill stated he has worked under several mayors, council members as well as city administrators and for forty-six years he has been surrounded by good fellow employees who work well together. Bill thanked the City of Mount Carmel for his employment all these years and stated he is very appreciative of the job. Mayor Judge thanked Bill for all his years of service and stated his work is greatly appreciated. Commissioner Dugar stated Bill has been instrumental in keeping the city functional throughout the years and thanked Bill for all his assistance as well as being patient with him while serving as Water/Sewer Commissioner. City Administrative Assistant Witsman stated Bill has always been more than willing to do his job, whatever it entailed and thanked Bill for all his time with the city.

Mayor Judge acknowledged Kendra Andrews, with the Rockets Foundation, who was seeking council approval for the twelfth annual Saint Mary's School Rockets 5K Run and Kids Fun Run on Saturday, February 27th. Ms. Andrews stated the race route will be the same as the previous years, however due to COVID restrictions, before the start of the race, the race packets will be handed out by "Packet Pick-Up Drive Thru". Mayor Judge advised the Mardi Gras Committee to contact the police department with the race route.

Mayor Judge reiterated at the December 28th council meeting a discussion was held regarding Wayne's Tree Service and their agreement with the city. Mayor Judge stated some of the information discussed was inaccurate and a meeting was held with Wayne's Tree Service to rectify a council decision regarding the use of the city's brush harbor. Mayor Judge reported Wayne's Tree Service does an excellent job for the city, however the city was frustrated in regard to the existing stump grinding agreement and that agreement has now been changed. Mayor Judge emphasized the city will continue to do business with Wayne's Tree Service.

Mayor Judge reported the State of Illinois has moved this region to Phase 4, which allows businesses to open back up and stated that decision is greatly appreciated.

Mayor Judge presented to the council a potential public works organizational chart for the city, which would make the individual departments more functional. Mayor Judge asked the council to review the chart and he will readdress the possibility of moving towards a public works department at a future council meeting.

Mayor Judge stated wearing masks are still mandated and encouraged residents to please wash their hands as well as to continue to practice social distancing. Mayor Judge reported the Wabash County Health Department is taking appointments for the COVID vaccine and they are pretty far out on the appointment list. Mayor Judge anticipates Wabash County seeing the rollout of vaccines quicker due to the Biden Administration making premises on having vaccines more readily available. Mayor Judge asked citizens to please be patient with health department as they doing the best they can at the present time.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

COMMISSIONER TOM MEEKS – STREETS, CEMETERIES AND PARKS

Commissioner Meeks absent.

COMMISSIONER ERIC IKEMIRE – FINANCE AND SENIOR CITIZENS

Statement of Receipts and Expenditures – See attached agenda with financials.

Commissioner Ikemire reported a good influx of revenues was received into the general fund within the last two weeks. Commissioner Ikemire stated the majority of the revenues were comprised of property tax monies. Commissioner Ikemire reported the city is on target to be ahead of budget this fiscal year.

COMMISSIONER JUSTIN DULGAR – WATER AND SEWER

Commissioner Dulgar stated he is looking forward to the next fiscal budget year for the wastewater plant because there are station upgrades that need to be done as the pump at the Mulberry Street lift station recently had to be changed out. Commissioner Dulgar reported all the projects that have been going on at the wastewater plant over the last four years should be completed in by the end of February.

Commissioner Dulgar reported the water treatment plant personnel have been performing its routine maintenance. Commissioner Dulgar stated City Administrative Assistant Witsman has been working on the EPA loan application for the proposed new water treatment plant which, will be presented to the council meeting for approval.

Commissioner Dulgar stated, with Bill Reed retiring, an opening for employment in the water/sewer department will be posted. Commissioner Dulgar commended the water/sewer department for their hard work and efforts.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER MADDEN – FIRE, HEALTH & SAFETY, GARBAGE, CITY HALL AND CIVIL DEFENSE

Commissioner Madden reported in the last two weeks the fire department responded to fifteen runs; the flag was raised for the funeral procession of former Police Chief and City Inspector Don Price, thoughts along with prayers are extended to the family.

Commissioner Madden announced, being at the end of February, the recycling program will be expanded and the recycling bins will be moved from Golden Aces Way to 130 Railroad Street. Commissioner Madden stated the bins will be located within the fenced-in area of the brush crew department building with the hours being 7:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Commissioner Madden stressed the residents should not leave recyclables outside of the fenced area when the gate is closed and please only put items in the bins that can be recycled. Commissioner Madden stated Republic Services has had to dispose of full bins because unaccepted items were put in those bins and has warned the city is if this continues, they will remove the recycling bins, which will permanently end the recycling program. Commissioner Madden stated an update of the actual start date at the new location and a list of acceptable items for the expanded program will be released in the near future. Commissioner Madden stressed the public's assistance in obeying the rules is critical to continue to have the recycling program.

Commissioner Madden reminded citizens, with the winter weather forecast this week, to please slow down and drive with caution; buckle up; stay off cell phones while driving.

CITY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT – RUDY WITSMAN

City Administrative Assistant Witsman reported he has approached by different people concerning the lots the city has available uptown along Market Street; being 321 N. Market Street (the former Warren Building), 414 and 416 N. Market Street (the former Hadley's building), and 504, 506, 508 N. Market Street (directly across from the Post Office). City Administrative Assistant Witsman stated, because of the interest that has been expressed regarding at least one of the vacant lots, he is seeking council approval to advertise for bids in order to find someone who is willing to purchase the lots and in turn "take them off the city's hands". City Administrative Witsman asked for council direction regarding any stipulations to be included with the proposed selling of the lots. After council discussion, it was agreed will would be no stipulations included and City Administrative Witsman will proceed with the advertisement of the bids.

City Administrative Assistant Witsman stated he received three inquiries regarding the mowing of the city's cemeteries, however he only received one bid from the current contractor; K & K Small Jobs. City Administrative Assistant Witsman reported that bid for the 2021 mowing season is \$20,400, which was the same amount as last year's contract price. City Administrative Assistant Witsman commended the contractor as he only billed and collected from the city \$18,550 in 2020. City Administrative Assistant Witsman reported the contractor included a three-year contract with his bid and asked council approval for that contract as follows: 2021 - \$20,400; 2022 - \$22,400; 2023 - \$23,000. City Administrative Assistant Witsman stated he has received very few complaints last year compared to years prior and clarified it is stated within the contract if the city is not satisfied with the work, they may cancel the contract at any time, if the issues cannot be resolved.

City Administrative Assistant Witsman presented to the council for approval Ordinance 2044, establishing a water plant fee payable on the monthly water bill at the rate established in the ordinance and stated this meeting constitutes the second reading of the ordinance.

City Administrative Assistant Witsman presented Ordinance 2046 to the council for approval, which authorizes the mayor to sign a loan agreement with the Illinois EPA in the amount of \$10,060,000 to pay for the engineering and construction of a new water plant as well as the demolition of the existing water plant. City Administrative Assistant Witsman stated after the ordinance is published in the newspaper, the city is required to wait thirty days before proceeding further, in the meantime a loan application will be prepared and submitted to the EPA for review. City Administrative Assistant Witsman is in hopes to have the application submitted by the end of the month to ensure a favorable placement on the Illinois EPA Project List for funding and stated all the work thus far has been undertaken to assist the city council in making their decision whether to proceed with the construction of a new water plant and the vote for the actual construction of a new plant will come at a later date. City Administrative Assistant Witsman clarified, due to the urgency of getting "higher up" on the EPA list and the possibility of receiving \$800,000 of loan forgiveness from the EPA, he is asking council to waive the second reading of the ordinance.

CITY ATTORNEY – BRADY WALDROP

City Attorney Waldrop no report.

CITY INSPECTOR – MIKE GIDCUMB

City Inspector Gidcumb absent.

STREET DEPARTMENT SUPERINTENDENT – DAVE EASTER

Street Department Superintendent Easter asked residents to please be patience this year with pot hole patching as the normal place the city receives the patch material from is not operational at this time as they are building a new plant. Street Department Superintendent Easter stated he is checking into other places to purchase the patch material as the city's supply is low.

Street Department Superintendent Easter reported his department is continuing to watch the weather in the case they need to treat the streets.

POLICE CHIEF – RYAN TURNER

Police Chief Turner recognized the fire department for their flag detail in honoring Don Price, former Police Chief of the City of Mount Carmel and stated their efforts are greatly appreciated.

FIRE CHIEF – FRANCES SPETH

Fire Chief Speth absent.

BUSINESS MOTIONS

Commissioner Dulgar motioned and Commissioner Ikemire seconded to accept the proposal from K & K Small Jobs for a three-year agreement. Fees accepted: 2021 - \$20,400; 2022 - \$22,400; 2023 - \$23,000. All present voted Aye by voice vote. Commissioner Meeks absent.

Commissioner Dulgar motioned and Commissioner Ikemire seconded to approve Ordinance 2044 establishing a water plant fee payable monthly at the rate established in the Ordinance. All present voted Aye by voice vote. Commissioner Meeks absent.

Commissioner Dulgar motioned and Commissioner Madden seconded to approve Ordinance 2046, authorizing a loan agreement with the Illinois EPA in the amount of \$10,060,000 for the construction of a new water plant. All present voted Aye by voice vote. Commissioner Meeks absent.

Commissioner Ikemire motioned and Commissioner Madden seconded to approve the Consent Agenda. The consent agenda included approval of the paying of all bills bearing the proper signatures. All present voted Aye by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 5:36 pm

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk