

**City of Auburn
Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 21, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Berola. Mayor Berola introduced Cub Scouts from Pack 356 who lead the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Clerk Sponsler was absent due to illness. Deputy Clerk Wayde Rathgeber called roll. Present were Mayor Berola, Deputy Clerk Rathgeber, Treasurer Williams, Alderman Garrett, Alderman Hemmerle, Alderman Johnson, Alderman Karhliker, Alderman Marquis, Alderman Powell, Alderman Royer, and Alderman Sheppard.

Also present were Superintendent Henson, Chief Campbell, and City Attorney Hedinger.

Mayor's Comments:

No comments.

Visitor's Comments:

There were no visitor comments.

City Clerk's Report

Deputy Clerk Rathgeber presented the February 6, 2023, meeting minutes for review and approval. Alderman Royer made a motion to approve the February 6, 2023, minutes, seconded by Alderman Marquis.

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Marquis, Powell, Royer, Sheppard
NAYES: None
PRESENT: None
ABSENT: None

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Williams presented the Bills List for February 6, 2023, through February 17, 2023 for review and approval. A motion was made to approve the Bills List for February 6, 2023, through February 17, 2023, by Alderman Powell, seconded by Alderman Sheppard.

AYES: Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Marquis, Powell, Sheppard
NAYES: Garrett, Royer
PRESENT: None
ABSENT: None

Treasurer Williams presented the February 17, 2023, Budget Report for review only.

Treasurer Williams reported the Video Gaming income was \$1,888.90 for, with the Fiscal Year current total being \$111,138.90

Attorney's Report

City Attorney Hedinger presented resolution #93-23 (A Resolution Authorizing Execution of Real Estate Purchase and Sale Agreement. Resolution is in regard to the sale of the Redbud Park Property at 15280 Kennedy Rd. Attorney Hedinger stated that an offer of \$600,000.00 was made and financing has been arranged for the purchase of the land. The purchaser's financial institution has supplied a letter of intent and has agreed that the sample sales contract provided by Attorney Hedinger was agreeable. Attorney Hedinger stated that they would work on completing the sales contract and mentioned that surveying will need to be completed.

Alderman Garrett made a motion seconded by Alderman Hemmerle to adopt Resolution #93-23.

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Marquis, Powell, Royer, Sheppard
NAYES: None
PRESENT: None
ABSENT: None

Attorney Hedinger next presented Ordinance #1526-23 (Ordinance Approving Pre-annexation Agreement Between Springfield Plastics and the City of Auburn)

Alderman Karhliker questioned the wording in the agreement that requires the City of Auburn to collect easements for what is essentially someone else's project. Alderman Royer countered with saying that the project was to benefit the citizens of the City of Auburn, so it was actually the City's project.

Alderman Johnson mentioned that if Springfield Plastics, Inc. (SPI) were to obtain the easements and EPA award, no public monies would be used, but SPI would be reimbursed. Attorney Hedinger explained that the EPA permits were to be handles by SPI, while that the easements would be taken care of by the City.

Alderman Johnson asked if SPI would be agreeable to drop the six-month backout stipulation, stating that he did not want the City to have engineering fees to pay due to a backout of the project by SPI. SPI attorney Chuck Davis stated that a 6 month delay could be put on the easements. Two easements have been agreed upon by the landowners and the Mayor stated that he believed that the last easement would also be agreed upon.

Alderman Karhliker asked Steve Baker about the type and size of the water tank that SPI is planning. Mr. Baker stated that it would be a ground tank and be as small as feasible. He also stated that it may not be 400,000 gallons.

Alderman Powell mentioned that once the water main was completed and the connection made, SPI would no longer be able to use their well. Steve Baker stated that he understands that and is looking forward to it. Alderman Powell also mentioned that once annexed, burning would also not be permitted. Mr. Baker stated that he also understood that burning was not permitted.

City Attorney Hedinger reminded the Council that the construction easements would not be wide enough to allow annexation but does allow pre-annexation.

Before the motion was made, Alderman Garrett stated that the City's outlay would be a minimal amount compared to the amount of impact the SPI agreement would have on the City. Steve Baker stated that he was ready to employ Benton & Associates as soon as the ink was dry on the agreement.

Alderman Sheppard made the motion to adopt Ordinance #1526.-23. Alderman Garrett seconded the motion.

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Marquis, Powell, Royer, Sheppard
NAYES: None
PRESENT: None
ABSENT: None

Mayor Berola stated that because the new Juneteenth Holiday is a Federal Holiday, the city would need to recognize it and begin observing it this year. Chief Campbell and Superintendent Henson stated that they did not believe the Unions would have any issues with recognizing the additional Holiday.

Department Head Reports

Campbell

Chief Campbell reported that Sergeant Troy Kissell would be leaving the employment of the City and starting with the City of Taylorville Police Department. He mentioned that Taylorville offered paid family health insurance. Alderman Marquis stated that might be something the City will need to look at in the future. Chief Campbell asked to hire part-time Officer Chase Burk as a full-time officer. Officer Burk has already completed full-time Police Academy.

Alderman Sheppard made a motion to hire Officer Chase Burk as a full-time officer. The motion was seconded by Alderman Marquis.

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Marquis, Powell, Royer, Sheppard
NAYES: None
PRESENT: None
ABSENT: None

Chief Campbell stated that he was still working on camera estimates and may need to check requirements from the State's Attorney's Office. Presently the cost is near \$47,000.00 for 5 years but hopes to possibly cut that amount by 70%.

Henson

Superintendent Henson reported that the 4th Street water main replacement should start in March.

Alderman Hemerle asked if the baseball fields would be clean and ready for practice, which begins February 27, 2023. Superintendent Henson stated that they should be ready to go.

Superintendent Henson reported that Safe Routes to School was set to bid in 2024. He also reported that the Divernon Road bridge project would be using hot-mix asphalt 330 feet around the bridge. The asphalt would probably need to run to the top of the hill on the East side and run back to the West to the intersection of Kennedy and Divernon Roads.

Rathgeber

Office Manager Rathgeber reported that numerous repairs have had to be made on the ACC furnace this winter. The Community Center has two furnaces but only one works. City employees have repaired the furnace two or three times and Rettberg's had to be called in the prior week. Rathgeber stated that he would gather estimates from 3 different HVAC repair businesses, looking to possibly add the cost of replacement to the FY 2023 budget.

Committee Reports

Administration – Johnson

No report.

Public Works – Karhliker

No report

Public Utilities – Johnson

Alderman Johnson reported that the utility funds were all doing well. All funds were in the black except for the Water Fund, which would probably be in the black after receipts from the February Utility Bills were processed. Johnson reported that the General Fund had a \$244,000.00 surplus; the Sewer Fund had a \$21,000.00 surplus; and the Gas Fund had a \$44,000.00 surplus.

Health & Safety – Marquis

No report

Health & Housing – Royer

Alderman Royer reported that there was still an ongoing problem with the property at 514 N. 5th St. Chief Campbell informed the Council that the owner of the property at 442 S. 6th Street had a court date for March 2, 2023, and was interested in working out a settlement. It was reported that someone was renting and occupying the property. It was decided to placard the property as being in violation of Section 13-105 through 13-108. The Mayor stated that the Code allows for an additional fine of \$500.00 if the amount previously owed is not paid. The code also states that after ninety days, if the fines and owed utility charges are not paid the structure could be demolished.

Parks – Hemmerle

No report

Economic Development – Garrett

Alderman Garrett made a request to allocate additional funds to the Economic Development budget line item in the FY 2023 budget. The funds would be used to offer assistance to new businesses. He suggested using funds generated by video gaming.

Alderman Royer stated he would like to use a more definite number, such as \$10,000.00 to \$15,000.00. The expenditure of funds would need Council approval and any funds not used would be placed in savings. Alderman Johnson asked Alderman Garrett if he could create a list of what the funds could be used for. Alderman Garrett asked Alderman Johnson if he thought that \$15,000.00 of the gaming funds could be earmarked for Economic Development, to which Alderman Johnson stated that he believed they could.

Building Committee – Garrett

Alderman Garrett reported that the Building Committee had met prior to the Council Meeting and reviewed the estimated costs for the new City Hall and remodeling of the present City Administration Building to serve as the Police Department. The committee had interviewed two organizations, namely Omni EP and Veregy. Both organizations presented estimates for the total of both projects with Omni EP's being \$4,674,452.00 and Veregy's being \$3,180,000.00. After deliberation the Building Committee chose to continue the project with Veregy. Part of the reasoning was that Veregy offered more help in financing and agreed to hold a grant slot for the project. No agreements have been signed at this point. Alderman Garrett thanked Chief Campbell and Building Inspector Ron Appelt for all the time and assistance they put in during the committee's due diligence.

Other Business

Alderman Sheppard reported that BLH Computers has agreed to hold another electronics recycling event. The event will be held on April 22, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. through 12:00 p.m. at Firehouse #2. Alderman Sheppard thanked Alderman Powell, who is also Fire Chief, for allowing the event to take place at the Firehouse again this year. Information about the event will be added to the City Facebook Page and on the City electronic sign.

BLH charges a fee of \$200.00 to the City to cover their expenses. Alderman Sheppard made a motion to authorize the \$200,00 expense. Alderman Marquis seconded the motion.

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Marquis, Powell, Royer, Sheppard
NAYES: None
PRESENT: None
ABSENT: None

Alderman Garrett reported that over a mile of sidewalk had been replaced in the years since he has leading the yearly sidewalk projects. He stated that this year the City would be taking a break on sidewalk replacement to concentrate more on street repair. He stated that the concentration would be on repairing potholes in June and July. Alderman Karhliker added that the oil & chip program needed to be completed by August 15th.

Alderman Garrett also asked that Council members and citizens contact him to report any hazardous trees in the City right-of-way.

Adjournment

Alderman Karhliker made a motion to adjourn at 8:33 p.m. Alderman Garrett seconded the motion.

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Marquis, Powell, Royer, Sheppard
NAYES: None
PRESENT: None
ABSENT: None

Respectfully Submitted,

Wayde Rathgeber, Deputy City Clerk

