

Athens City Council
Committee Meeting
Thursday, February 6, 2020

Mayor Bob Dowell opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. Clerk Cindy McFarland called roll. Those in attendance were Mayor Bob Dowell, Clerk Cindy McFarland, and Aldermen: Larry Buhr, Amy Chernowsky, Rachel Lantz, Butch Nichols, Chris Reichert, and Angella Thompson. Persons in the audience included Ryan Seifert, Gary Richardson, Robbie Bluett, Michael Lockwood, Nicole McCormick, Tim and Michelle Becker, and Craig Jensen.

Mayor Dowell opened the meeting by thanking everyone for their kindness and support for him and his family concerning the recent passing of his father. Chief Becker presented the police and said that the speed control sign had been repaired and returned. It will be set up and gathering speed data in town again soon. Ryan Seifert presented the Treasurer Report. Mayor Dowell presented the Streets Report. Several streets throughout town have been patched. A gas-powered drain/culvert jetter was used in five locations to improve drainage. We would like to look into purchasing a jetter. The price range is \$1800-\$2500. Robbie Bluett presented the Water and Wastewater Reports. He explained that there had been a meeting at the water plant to review operations and assist them with plant operations. A memo of the findings was provided to the council. One recommendation was that a high efficiency dehumidifier for the plant would be helpful to prevent corrosion in the plant. Robby also provided a quote for 260 new Badger water meters at \$155 each for a total of \$40,300 to replace water meters that are not reading correctly. The malfunctioning meters are causing approximately 200 re-reads to be done each month which is very costly in man-hours. Mayor Dowell asked if the dehumidifiers or the meters are needed first. Robby stated that the meters are a priority. The council discussed how many meters should be purchased, payment options, and the time frame needed for installation of the new meters. It was decided that purchasing 260 meters funded by borrowing from the water meter fund would be the best option. The Mayor said approval for this purchase will be on the agenda for Monday. There will no cemetery report. Nicole McCormick presented the Office Manager's report explaining that Lisa Bohannon and Lyndsey Bosie have taken over as Chair and Co-chair of the Fall Festival. The bank account has been changed over to their names, so the city will no longer be responsible for that account. The Mayor presented the fleet report and a letter from Illinois Department of Transportation. The letter communicated the closing of a portion of IL 123 for improvements from June 1 to August 15, 2020.

Under discussion topics, Mayor Dowell shared that, in regards to the recent apartment fire, he had sent a letter to the Mayor of Petersburg offering our condolences, prayers and full resources to the City of Petersburg during this most difficult time. The Mayor's letter and Mayor Snyder's response can be seen on the city website.

Next, Mayor Dowell explained that HGTV is hosting a new contest for a Main Street makeover which involves an entire small-town update. Mayor Dowell submitted our application for the contest including photos, our needs and hopes for improvements, as well as our status as "the community that cares."

The next discussion topic was the Youth Appreciation Reception which will be held to celebrate the accomplishments of the youth of our community. Mayor Dowell and School Superintendent Scott Laird will announce the date soon, most likely near the end of April.

The Mayor went on to the topic of the upcoming 2020 census. The actual census taking will begin in April. We will continue to work to get the word out.

The last discussion topic was the city vacant lot projects. Mayor Dowell had requested information concerning the proper process to move forward from our attorney. The attorney had not responded so

the Mayor contacted them again and said that he would research the process himself and to make sure not to bill us.

The Mayor asked if anyone had anything else for discussion. Alderman Reichert said that a resident had shown him his trash removal bill and that the price had increased steeply. Mayor Dowell offered to call the trash company on behalf of the resident. Another option would be to choose another company. The Mayor said that he had received several texts, calls and communications from city residents saying that they would like to continue to choose their own trash removal company.

Under old business, an update on problem properties, Mayor Dowell said that the next court date for our long-standing problem properties is scheduled for February 20, 2020 at 9am and 1:30pm. Mayor Dowell said that he would also be sitting down with Fire Chief Joe Crowe to discuss safety issues concerning some structures in our city.

Last was the drawing for the weather radio giveaway in conjunction with Athens being a Storm Ready Community. Tenley Seifert drew the name of Kent Weil. Congratulations!

That ended the agenda for the evening. The Mayor thanked everyone and asked for a motion to adjourn to executive session. Motion made by Alderman Buhr, seconded by Alderman Nichols, to adjourn to executive session at 7:53pm. The council returned from executive session at 8:07pm and adjourned.