

Athens City Council
Committee Meeting
Tuesday, October 13, 2020
Zoom Meeting ID: 825-300-3670 / Password: Apr9Athens

Mayor Bob Dowell opened the meeting and explained that tonight's meeting was originally scheduled for Thursday, October 8, 2020. However, a city employee tested positive for COVID. Some city personnel were tested. When Mayor Dowell went to be tested, he found out that he had a fever and was quarantined. Mayor Dowell contacted the city attorney and was advised to cancel the meeting and hold both meetings via Zoom tonight. Mayor Dowell said that there was also a spike in positive cases in our area. He apologized for the inconvenience in moving the meeting, however, protecting the citizens of our community is our first priority. Clerk Cindy McFarland called roll. Those in attendance were Mayor Bob Dowell, and Aldermen: Larry Buhr, Amy Chernowsky, Rachel Lantz, Butch Nichols, Chris Reichert, and Angella Thompson. Persons in the audience included Gary Richardson, Rick and Christine Freer, Derrick Fritz, Nicole McCormick, and Michael Lockwood.

Sgt. Fritz presented the Police Report and said that there had been three ordinance warnings issued this month, two of which were bicycle related. Mayor Dowell said that he had received positive feedback about the new bike ordinances. Sgt. Fritz said that these ordinances are for the safety of the kids and our citizens. Mayor Dowell presented the Treasurer's report and the Streets report. He also presented the Water Report and said that Michael Lockwood was present as well to answer any questions. Mayor Dowell presented the Wastewater report and the Office Manager's report. He explained that meter shut-offs for delinquent accounts were done on September 23rd with a total of five being shut off. These customers were required to pay half of their balance to be turned back on. All five have since paid. Certified letters were sent and the water clerk had also made several attempts to contact these delinquent customers by phone in hopes that these shut-offs could be avoided. The next shut-offs are scheduled for October 13th. Mayor Dowell also presented the Fleet Maintenance report. The council discussed the use of the speed radar machine, the high speeds detected on West Jackson and Lynwood Drive, and the possibility of adding an additional radar machine.

There was no presentation from any businesses due to the meeting being held over Zoom. However, the Mayor explained that he had received a letter from Main Street Gaming that he would like to read. The letter was from the owner, Dave Irwin. Mr. Irwin wrote to thank the city for the \$1000 grant to aid his small business during Covid. Mr. Irwin said that he intends to repay the full amount to the city. In addition, Mr. Irwin sent a \$300 check to donate to the Halloween Trunk or Treat participants. Mayor Dowell said that we have received a couple other anonymous donations as well.

First on the discussion agenda was an update on our city engineers. Mayor Dowell said that there is a meeting tomorrow morning at 9am with the engineers and the city supervisors. The engineers will tour with the supervisor of each area to determine needs and options. Then the engineers will work with us on a plan with realistic goals and creative funding options to fulfill these needs.

Next the Mayor said that Sgt. Fritz, Budget Officer, has a presentation on Water Distribution System Improvements. This is the report that the council received a couple months ago. Sgt. Fritz summarized his presentation which was broken down into needs, costs, and funding. Wells #4 and #5 are older and are in need of replacement. They are on their last leg and should be considered day to day. The cost of the test holes and two new wells were estimated by Brotcke Well & Pump. The estimate of the "pigging" of the raw line was provided by our last city engineer. There are very few companies that perform the "pigging" service. Brotcke is going to provide a list of a few companies that they recommend. Nicole is working on getting bids for a new billing system. New meters and tower maintenance are additional costs. As for funding, Sgt. Fritz proposed a \$5 per month

Infrastructure Maintenance Fee. He also contacted the USDA Rural Development program about a possible loan. For the meters and billing software, using the meter deposit funds may be a possibility. Mayor Dowell said that it will be up to the council as to how we will pay for these needs. Alderman Nichols asked if we have provided this information to our city engineers. Mayor Dowell replied affirmatively. The Mayor said that he also has a presentation on a thumb drive that was submitted by another company if any of the council members would like to check it out and review the presentation at home. Mayor Dowell said that next spring or early summer is when we need to get going on whatever plan we choose. Alderman Nichols said that we need our engineers to review this and let us know what they recommend as to what needs to be done first. The council discussed the possible \$5 monthly surcharge, our current monthly loan payments, possibly increasing the number of sewer customers, new loan & payment options, and the how a new billing system would affect additional revenue. Mayor Dowell said that hopefully, after the new engineers complete their tours with the city supervisors, they will be able to give us a plan and options for funding.

Mayor Dowell asked if there was anything else or if anyone had any questions. Alderman Lantz said that Linda Wasilewski had called her and asked that, when the streets crew plow the snow, that they do not push the rocks up into the grass. Mayor Dowell said that Sgt. Fritz is keeping an eye on several of our problem properties. Council adjourned at 7:54pm for a 10 minute recess after which the regular council meeting would commence.