

Athens City Council
Committee Meeting
Thursday, November 5, 2020
Zoom Meeting ID: 825-300-3670 / Password: Apr9Athens

Mayor Bob Dowell opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. 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, Tim Becker, and Nicole McCormick. Ryan Seifert arrived at 7:23pm.

Chief Becker presented the Police Report and asked if the council had any questions. Mayor Dowell presented the Treasurer's Report. Alderman Reichert confirmed that \$2,500 of the gaming funds transferred to the general fund are for Covid-19 business relief. Mayor Dowell presented the Streets and Alleys Report. He said that the F450 needs tires. We have a quote from Bert's for \$1,624.82 for all six tires. The vote to approve this purchase will be on the agenda for Monday. Branch pick-up will be suspended until March. Mayor Dowell presented the Water Report and the Sewer Report. Nicole McCormick presented the Office Manager's Report. Employee health insurance costs have increased quite a bit. We are waiting on more quotes from our insurance representative. There was no Cemetery or Vehicle Maintenance reports.

First on the discussion agenda was an update on Covid-19. Mayor Dowell said that we have received quotes for several needed items for which we will be eligible for reimbursement from the Covid-19 CARES Act. We have received quotes for the iPads and accessories for staff, the ZOOM subscription for remote meetings, and a fogger type machine that will disinfect surfaces.

Next the Mayor said that he had been contacted by the Beal family about renaming the alley between the Main Street Mall and the Post Office to "Beal Alley." Ron and Nancy Beal lived along this alley for about fifty years and recently passed away. Their daughter lives in the house now and made this request. The Mayor asked if the council had any objection to this renaming. There were no objections. This will be on the voting agenda for Monday.

Information on improvements for the water department was next on the agenda. Mayor Dowell said that he received good news from the engineers. They are working on funding for two new emergency wells and are optimistic that we will receive this funding. This led to the next topic, cost saving measures for the city. The State will do an energy audit for us at the water plant, the sewer plant, and city hall. Also, Mayor Dowell is doing away with the Mayor's cell phone. He will just use his own phone and save the city a little money. Also, there is a meeting planned with city employees to discuss their ideas for conserving resources and other ways to save the city money. The Mayor asked the council to submit any ideas they may have as well.

The next agenda topic was information regarding Stahl Foundation funding requests. The city has requested three bids for replacing the park concession stand complete with ADA compliant restrooms. We have not received any of the bids yet. This may be due to the increasing cost of goods during the Covid-19 emergency. The Stahl Foundation could set aside this money from this year to build the concession stand next year. Also, the request for the new cameras at the park for this year still needs to go before the Stahl Foundation Board.

Last on the agenda was the selling of city owned properties. Mayor Dowell said that the pictures of each property have been taken. The council will vote on Monday on approving the sale of these properties. They will be advertised via social media and our city website. There was discussion about the size of the lots and the possibility of allowing modular or manufactured homes on the properties.

Mayor Dowell said that he had one more thing. The new city engineers sent the council an email with some ideas that the council may want to move forward with. The engineers assured us that they will work with us every step of the way. Monday's agenda will include a vote on moving forward with these ideas without incurring a lot of cost. The Mayor asked the council if they had any questions about the proposals in the letter. There were no questions.

Under old business was an update on problem properties. Mayor Dowell said that Sgt. Fritz is still working on this. Some of the properties are looking much better now.

The Mayor asked if there was anything else. The council adjourned to Executive Session at 7:38pm and returned to regular session at 7:56pm. There was discussion about the possibility of selling portable shed type buildings on city property. Council adjourned at 8:14pm.