
SYCAMORE CITY COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF DECEMBER 6, 2004

ROLL CALL

Mayor John Swedberg called the meeting to order and Clerk Candy Smith called the roll. Those Alderpersons present were: Alan Bauer, Barbara Leach, Terry Kessler, Andrew Larson, Cheryl Maness, Pete Paulsen, Chuck Stowe, and Janice Tripp.

INVOCATION

Pastor Steve Best of Wellspring Chapel gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Swedberg added Item C. Introduction by Rose Trembl, Sycamore Chamber of Commerce Executive Director to Presentations of Petitions, Communications, and Bills.

Motion

Alderperson Larson moved to approve the agenda with the addition and Alderperson Leach seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderpersons voted aye. Motion carried 8 - 0.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

None

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the Minutes for the City Council Meeting of November 15, 2004;
- B. Payment of the Bills for December 6, 2004 in the amount of \$914,339.18.

Motion

Alderperson Stowe moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Alderperson Maness seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderpersons voted aye. Motion carried 8 - 0.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND BILLS.

- A. Consideration of a Presentation by the Sycamore Economic Development Commission. Commissioner Bill Nicklas will introduce Mike and Dan Larson of Elmer Larson, Inc. who will give a brief overview of the products and services of their firm.

Manager Nicklas introduced representatives of Elmer Larson, Inc. as Mike Larson, Dan Larson, Steve Larson and John Larson.

Mike Larson said his Grandfather Elmer started the business and his Father Leon took over when he got home from serving in the Navy in WWII. Mr. Larson said their business was a string of quarries and gravel pits from south of Rockford to Joliet and in 1969 they sold all assets except the operation in Cortland Township. He said they employ 50+ people including truck drivers, mechanics, heavy equipment operators, stone washers and administrative staff. He said it really takes a team to run their business. They sell to ready mix plants, asphalt plants, all units of City government, developers, homebuilders, landscapers, masons, and are trying to sell to brick manufacturers. He said until 4 years ago they were mining horizontally and now they are mining vertically and will eventually go as deep as 500 feet. He said the imprint of the excavation started at 33 acres and will narrow to about 27 acres at the bottom. Mr. Larson said when they mined horizontally they mined about 200,000 tons of stone per acre and now going vertically they will get about 1,400,000 tons of stone per acre. He said they hold an open house the last Saturday of April from 9:00 a.m. to noon each year for the public. Mr. Larson thanked Council for the opportunity to speak about their business and said he appreciates doing business with the City of Sycamore.

Mayor Swedberg asked how many years before they were mined out and Mr. Larson estimated about 350 years.

- B. State Representative Robert Pritchard will briefly review the results of the veto session in the Illinois legislature.

Representative Pritchard said they were in veto session for five days and looked at only 6 of the 44 bills vetoed. He said they used the time to pass a few new bills and he had hoped to deal with some budget issues but they have postponed discussing capital items until January 10 and 11. He said the governor has chosen to freeze monies promised to Sycamore's sewer project and Museum of Natural History. He said they will discuss Indian gaming, truck speed limits, education funding, and he asked Council for inputs for their needs. He said that Illinois is not recovering economically as fast as some surrounding states.

Manager Nicklas said he is concerned about how state services are delivered and said it seemed there are certain executive departments that are subject to legislative direction that are broken. He said that the Illinois Department of Transportation takes 6 to 12 months to grant approvals.

Representative Pritchard said that the governor has a few people making the decisions that department heads used to make. Rep. Pritchard said he is looking for ways to give local government more control.

- C. Introduction by Sycamore Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Rose Tremel.

Executive Director Rose Tremel said she was pleased to introduce Kayte Sparkman as the new Discover Director. She said Ms. Sparkman grew up in the area, is an NIU graduate and will earn her Masters Degree in Communications in May.

Kayte Sparkman said she is looking forward to working with the City Council.

Mayor Swedberg reported that thanks to Larry Forsberg's nomination, Sycamore has been chosen as the 1st community to be highlighted in a radio program called AgriTalks. He said the focus is on rural America and will be broadcast from the Farm Bureau Tuesday, December 14 at 10:00 a.m. and audience members are welcome.

Rose Tremel, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, said it is a "hometown tour" for the nationally syndicated program. She suggested visiting agritalk.com and said this is an honor for Sycamore and will give the City great national press coverage.

Mayor Swedberg said there will be IDOT presentations regarding the Prairie Parkway Wednesday, December 8 at the elementary school in Kirkland, and Thursday, December 9 at the elementary school in Morris. He said the Parkway would eventually impact DeKalb County.

Aldersperson Bauer said he and Steve Munz would be holding a neighborhood watch meeting Tuesday, December 7 in the Council Chambers. Mr. Bauer also inquired when they should start the process for a special census. Mr. Nicklas said that would be a budget item and they would discuss that during the budget process.

Aldersperson Larson asked for an update on the Keven Dahl project be the Middle School. Mayor Swedberg said that Nicor and Verizon had caused delays with work that should be completed this week. Engineer Brady said utilities and weather have caused delays. Mr. Brady said there is some temporary pavement and one leg of Maplewood, the west lane, needs one more lane. He said they will soon button it up for the winter. Aldersperson Bauer asked if the blacktop would be removed next year and Mr. Brady said it would stay down.

Aldersperson Kessler asked for extrapolation of costs and labor for mechanics bills to see if the City is headed toward a fulltime mechanic. Manager Nicklas said there is a fulltime mechanic at Public Works and a part-time mechanic for the Fire Department. He said one of the issues is space and he would get something put together.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

Manager – Bill Nicklas said December 9 there will be a Joint Review Board meeting which is another forum of local taxing bodies that reviews the TIF District. He said the TIF District is not generating much increment at this point because there is still major environmental issues to clean up in the middle of it. He said he will report at the January meeting. Mr. Nicklas said there will be a local taxing bodies meeting December 16 at 3:00 p.m. to discuss incentives.

Engineer – John Brady reported that the first lift of binder was put down today at Somonauk and Becker and the final surface will be put down next summer. He said there are 3 more weeks of underground to do at Bethany before they shut down until April.

Building & Zoning –Lyle Doty said he welcomed an additional inspector on board today. Mayor Swedberg asked Mr. Doty to bring the new inspector to the next Council meeting.

Fire Chief – Bill Riddle reported that DeKalb County Fire Departments received \$160,000 worth of homeland Security grants. He said the City of Sycamore received 4 portable radios and 2 generator sets valued at \$12,000. The county Hazmat Team received level A hazmat suits and equipment. Additionally, MABAS 6 departments received 2 fit test machines used to test SCBA masks.

Treasurer – Ken Mundy reported that November's financial budget benchmark is 58% and the revenues are tracking at 61% and the expenses are at the low 40's. He said he is working closely with Brian Gregory in the Finance Department with pension reinvestments and he said the rates are trending upwards.

Public Works Supt. – Fred Busse provided Council with a Leaf Pickup Program summary with a final cost of \$47,032.56 for 2004. He said they currently load the leaves in 30-yard dumpsters which would cost the City \$9,000 if the dumpsters were billed separately and not included in the Waste Management contract.

Aldersperson Tripp complimented the department on a job well done.

Aldersperson Maness said she appreciated the department returning for the late leaves.

Superintendent Busse said there have already been two snowfalls and reminded the public that the parking ordinance states that after 2" of snowfall cars must be moved off the street within 8 hours.

Manager Nicklas said the 8-hour rule is in force for removing snow off downtown sidewalks as well.

Water Supt. – Ebe Smith reported the Water Department had worked on 5 watermain breaks since the last Council meeting.

Police Chief – Don Thomas reported that Sgt. Steve Cook has completed a 3-month training at Northwestern University and is back on the streets.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance – no report

Ordinance – no report

Police & Fire – no report

Sewer & Water – Chairperson Tripp said she has been working with Manager Nicklas, Assistant to the Manager Brian Gregory, and Water Superintendent Ebe Smith on water rates and scheduled a meeting for January 17, 2005.

Streets & Walks – no report

PUBLIC HEARING

A. Public Hearing on the Proposed 2004 Corporate Levy.

Manager Nicklas explained that the public hearing is held to allow the public to comment on what they read in the media notice. He said Library Director Sarah Tobias was in attendance to answer questions. Mr. Nicklas said the proposed corporate levy is \$2,876,279 which represents an increase of \$94,451 (3.4%) over last year and should result in a rate decrease of 3%. He said the property taxpayer is mostly concerned with the bill they get in the late spring that shows the rate and their EAV.

Upon hearing no public comment, Mayor Swedberg declared the hearing closed.

ORDINANCES

A. Ordinance No. 2004.59—An Ordinance Amending the Combined Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for Fiscal Year 2004 to 2005 in the City of Sycamore, Illinois. First and Second Reading.

Manager Nicklas said after receiving the audit estimated year-end numbers are replaced by actual numbers. He listed other important revisions to the FY2005 Budget as:

- A deletion of the \$100,000 equity transfer from the General Fund's reserve to the Employee Benefit Assistance Fund (Fund 23). It appears that the retirement of several senior City employees will not occur until FY06.
- A projected increase of \$17,000 in estimated Restaurant/Bar taxes. This increase will fund the advance hiring of a replacement police officer in anticipation of the retirement of a senior police sergeant in mid-2005. The advance hiring will assure that the new officer is available for "solo" shift duty by the end of the fiscal year, in order to maintain current shift strength. The Police department budget has been increased by a like amount.

- A projected increase of \$17,900 in the 1% state sales tax to reflect a corresponding increase in car sales.
- An increase in intergovernmental revenue to reflect a retroactive federal grant of \$67,715 associated with hires made in the Police department several years ago. These monies reimburse the General Fund for wages and benefits already expended.
- A more accurate reflection of health, worker comp, and liability insurance costs in the General Fund Support budget of the General Fund (#513), and a more current estimate of the City's incentive obligations.
- The addition of a part-time intern position in cooperation with the master's program offered by NIU's Public Administration division of the Political Science department (702-8103). A corresponding reduction in the General Fund's contingency budget (513-8497) has been made to offset this additional expense (estimated to be \$6,000 for the balance of the fiscal year).
- Enhanced revenue in the Capital Assistance Fund (Fund 6) owing to two federal grants: one in the amount of \$31,600 to help finance the purchase of new turnout gear for all firefighters, and one in the amount of \$4,584.76 to offset a portion of the cost associated with the purchase of new bulletproof vests for patrol officers.
- The recognition of potential new sales tax revenues from American Aviation Supply in the Sales Tax Distributive Fund (Fund 22) and a re-formatting of that budget's spreadsheet to more clearly delineate the estimated revenues from both American Aviation Supply and United Aviation Fuels Corporation. In addition, on the expense side, Fund 22 will show a \$40,000 allocation for the consulting services of the Center for Governmental Studies which is conducting a comprehensive community fiscal impact study.
- Updated cost projections in the 2002 Bond Proceeds Fund (Fund 24) for the downtown street projects of 2004 (24-8634) and remodeling at 535 DeKalb Avenue (24-8348). The remodeling costs at 535 DeKalb Avenue include the unexpected replacement of the Police department's heating and cooling plant as well as substantial upgrades to the Public Safety Building's main electrical panel.
- New estimates of cost for the completion of Well #9 in the 2003 EPA Loan Fund (Fund 25).

Motion

Aldersperson Larson moved to hear Ordinance 2004.59 on first and second reading and Aldersperson Stowe seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 8 - 0.

Motion

Aldersperson Stowe moved to approve Ordinance 2004.59 and Aldersperson Maness seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 8 - 0.

B. Ordinance No. 2004.60—An Ordinance Levying Taxes for the Corporate Purposes of the City of Sycamore for the Fiscal Year Commencing May 1, 2004 and Ending April 30, 2005. First Reading Only.

Manager Nicklas said this ordinance and the next three ordinances would be heard on first reading. He said the abatement ordinances are good news for the local taxpayers since the City does not rely predominantly on property tax for debt services.

Mayor Swedberg complimented Manager Nicklas and the staff for working so efficiently and he said it is reflected in the budget.

- C. **Ordinance No. 2004.61—An Ordinance Abating the Debt Service Levy for the 1999 Revenue Bond Issue for the City of Sycamore, DeKalb County, Illinois for Fiscal Year 2004-2005. First Reading Only.**
- D. **Ordinance No. 2004.62—An Ordinance Abating the Debt Service Levy for the 2002 General Obligation Bond Issue for the City of Sycamore, DeKalb County, Illinois for Fiscal Year 2004-2005. First Reading Only.**
- E. **Ordinance No. 2004.63--An Ordinance Abating the Debt Service Levy for the 2003 General Obligation Bond Issue for the City of Sycamore, DeKalb County, Illinois for Fiscal Year 2004-2005. First Reading Only.**

RESOLUTIONS

None

CONSIDERATIONS

A. Consideration of an Administration Recommendation to Authorize the Hiring of a Replacement Police Officer.

Manager Nicklas asked Council to authorize the Sycamore Fire and Police Commission to proceed with the hiring of a replacement officer as soon as possible.

Mayor Swedberg asked if this hire would come from the hiring list and Police Chief Thomas said it would.

Manager Nicklas said the Police and Fire Commission met last week and are eager to proceed upon Council's direction.

Aldersperson Kessler asked if Officer Richter was a transfer and Chief Thomas said he was an original recruit that the City sent to training. Chief Thomas said he was hired 2 ½ years ago, but the probationary period was halted when he was called to active duty. He said they had invested about \$3,000 in salary and \$4,500 in training, tuition and fees. Aldersperson Kessler asked if it would be to the City's advantage to hire a transfer. Chief Thomas said the replacement for Sgt. Snyder is fully trained, but this officer will need to be fully trained.

Aldersperson Larson asked if Mr. Richter was going elsewhere to be an officer and Chief Thomas said he was not aware of that. Aldersperson Larson asked if the City has an ordinance to recoup the cost of training and Chief Thomas said Sycamore does not. Chief Thomas said that was discussed at the Police and Fire Commission meeting.

Manager Nicklas said this should be discussed by the Police and Fire Commission.

Motion

Aldersperson Larson moved to authorize the hiring of a replacement police officer and Aldersperson Kessler seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 8 - 0.

F. Consideration of an Administration Request for a Closed Session to Discuss Collective Bargaining and Closed Session Minutes.

Motion

Aldersperson Larson moved to go into Closed Session at 8:35 p.m. and Aldersperson Leach seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 8 - 0.

Aldersperson Kessler left the Closed meeting for the discussion of IAFF Collective Bargaining.

Motion

Aldersperson Larson moved to return to Open Session at 9:30 p.m. and Aldersperson Maness seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

APPOINTMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Aldersperson Stowe moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m. and Aldersperson Tripp seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

Approve:

Mayor – John L. Swedberg

Attest:

City Clerk – Candy Smith