
SYCAMORE CITY COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF MARCH 17, 2008

ROLL CALL

Mayor Ken Mundy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and Clerk Candy Smith called the roll. Those Alderpersons present were: Grace Adee, Alan Bauer, Terry Kessler, Rich Neubauer, Pete Paulsen, and Gregory Taylor. Alderpersons Darren Knuth and Chuck Stowe were absent.

INVOCATION

Pastor William Mills of the Bethel Assembly of God gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Aldersperson Knuth arrived at 7:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion

Aldersperson Neubauer moved to approve the agenda and Aldersperson Taylor seconded the motion.

Voice vote

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

Mayor Mundy introduced Rich Para to report on the Midwest Museum of Natural History.

Rich Para said he was a Midwest Museum board member and said he also owns and operates the Ben Franklin Store in downtown Sycamore. He said the Museum is a thriving and growing business because of the initial support and donations of private individuals and businesses and now income generated from memberships, rentals, and the Museum store is what is keeping it going. He said while most businesses are going through a bad time right now, the Museum is showing growth. He said the Museum is providing an economic stimulus to Sycamore. He asked Council to consider the Museum in the 2009 budget.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

Michael Fogelsanger, 845 Sunset Lane, expressed concern about the Park District subsidizing babysitting with tax dollars. He also expressed concern that the School District spent tax dollars on sports. He said he did not think the City should spend money on bike trails when so many streets need to be fixed. He said the City should prioritize where the money is spent.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the Minutes for the Regular City Council Meeting of March 3, 2008.
- B. Payment of the Bills for March 17, 2008 in the amount of \$345,571.65.

Motion

Aldersperson Bauer moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Aldersperson Neubauer seconded the motion.

Voice vote

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

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND BILLS.

- A. Presentation by Joyce Mathey on the occasion of the third anniversary of the Pay-It-Forward House. Mrs. Mathey will review the facility's services and invite the Council and all interested residents to an anniversary open house on Sunday, March 30.

Joyce Mathey said that since opening their doors in March 2005, they have provided over 3,500 nights of rest. She said that all the guests are impressed with and grateful to our community for our generosity. She said they estimated that over the past three years volunteers have donated over 10,000 hours of their time. She invited everyone to the High Tea Anniversary open house Sunday March 30 from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

Manager – Bill Nicklas said within the next couple of months residents should receive the IRS check proposed to stimulate the economy and he asked residents to spend locally. He also addressed Mr. Fogelsanger's concern about a bike path in the Capital program. He said three years ago the City entered into an intergovernmental agreement with DeKalb County where the County would expand Peace Road from two to four lanes from Barber Greene to Route 64 and do the upgrading and the first lift of a bike path. He said in that plan is the City's contribution to the completion of that bike path.

Engineer – John Brady said he has been working on the streetscape project at Main Street and E. State Street. He said some of that is on State Route 64 and will need state approval for the street lighting design. He said he hopes to get that part done soon.

Building & Zoning – Lyle Doty said he wrote a permit for a Tai Kwon Do School in the old Oasis Restaurant Building on DeKalb Avenue.

Fire Chief – Bill Riddle deferred his report to the consideration of ambulance fees.

Treasurer/Asst. City Manager – Brian Gregory said the Treasurer's report through February is at a benchmark of 83.33% with revenues at 85% and expenditures just under 62%. He also noted that the actuarial funds are funded at 84.5% for Police and Fire is 78.9%.

Police Chief – Don Thomas said that because there will be a lot of IRS checks in the mail, residents should watch their mailboxes because there will be a lot of checks stolen.

Public Works Director – Fred Busse referred to a map from ComEd demonstrating where tree-trimming will occur. He said that everybody living within those areas should have received some notice.

Assistant Public Works Director – Ebe Smith said there have been a few water main breaks over the winter and he said that Public Works will be out to repair those areas as soon as the weather breaks.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance – Chairperson Bauer said there will be a Finance Committee Meeting Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

Ordinance – no report

Police & Fire – no report

Sewer & Water – no report

Streets & Walks – no report

PUBLIC HEARING - None

ORDINANCES - None

RESOLUTIONS - None

CONSIDERATIONS

A. Consideration of the Preliminary FY2008-2009 City Budget.

City Manager Nicklas said that copies of the budget have been distributed and are available in the City Clerk's office and at the Library. He said there will be a Finance Committee meeting Wednesday to go over the budget and answer any questions.

B. Consideration of an Extension to the Contract Between the City of Sycamore and the Sycamore Chamber of Commerce for Visitor Attraction and Economic Development.

City Manager Nicklas explained that in the late 1990's the City and the Chamber had an agreement that granted about \$60,000 to the Chamber that included what is in the background here, plus a couple of capital projects and events. He said the current 3-year agreement for \$45,000 per year will expire April 30, 2008. He said the proposed 3-year contract is for \$50,000 per year. He said the additional \$5,000 per year is for enhancing and maintaining a more dynamic web presence.

Motion

Alderson Bauer moved to approve the agreement and Alderson Paulsen seconded the motion.

Alderson Bauer said he was around when this began a few years back and the reports that they have provided put real dollars and numbers to where the money is used.

Alderson Kessler said the Chamber is a strong, positive face for the City of Sycamore and she felt that this was money well spent.

Mayor Mundy said he thought that Executive Director Rose Treml and her staff have come up with good ways to measure the success of the Chamber.

Roll call vote

Mayor Mundy called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Aldersons Adee, Bauer, Kessler, Knuth, Neubauer, Paulsen, and Taylor voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

C. Consideration of a Recommendation from the Building & Zoning Department to Revise Water and Sewer Connection Fees for Commercial and Industrial Uses.

City Manager Nicklas said this is meant to address the unforeseen dilemma as they apply to commercial and industrial. He said the problem seems to arise from some expectations made years ago about water use and certain types of fixtures and certain types of uses. He said the unforeseen dilemma has become more apparent because of the increased commercial interest in Sycamore's Bethany Road corridor and nearby commercial strip centers. He said in order to avoid discouraging this promising trend, Mr. Doty has reviewed

the data and recommends some revisions that parallel certain features of the City's incentive policy for industrial starts, which also favors job creation.

Mayor Mundy said they need to look at fairness, reality, and also competition. He said he thought the basics outlined here make a lot of sense.

Mr. Nicklas said they are not proposing any change in impacts on the systems for businesses that would create high volume water use.

Aldersperson Neubauer said he supports this proposal because he thought in the end we would get our money back. He said he wanted to make sure that this would not cause water and sewer fees to increase for the residents.

Mr. Nicklas said the Council may want to review our impact fees and our user fees later in the year, but that would be separate from this.

Council directed Mr. Nicklas to put the modified fee schedule on the next agenda.

D. Consideration of a Recommendation from the Fire Department to Revise the City's Ambulance Fees.

City Manager Nicklas thanked Fire Chief Riddle and his staff for preparing a lot of the numbers for the background. He said there has not been an increase since 2002. He said they are proposing a 20% increase in ambulance fees to offset a little more of the actual cost of transporting patients plus the outsourcing of the patient billing to Kishwaukee Hospital.

Mayor Mundy said this made sense because our auditors are always looking for ways to separate duties and this is a move in that direction.

Aldersperson Kessler said she was leaning more toward a 30% increase because most of the money is coming from insurance and not the citizens.

Aldersperson Taylor said he does not want to be the cause for having everybody's medical insurance go up. He asked what ALS2 meant.

Chief Riddle said that ALS2 is a rare call when advanced procedures are done like artificial airways. He said they put that in because insurance will pay.

Aldersperson Taylor said they need to raise the rate, but is reluctant to raise it 30% because of those citizens who don't pay by insurance.

Mr. Nicklas said they did talk about 30%, but suggested starting with 20% to see what the impact would be on those carrying no or partial insurance. He said we should know that impact by budget time next year.

Aldersperson Neubauer asked if there is a typical percentage paid by insurance.

Chief Riddle said it is 90% to 100% and he was not sure about Medicare. He said the indigent people are probably in that 20% that don't pay and they also use the emergency room as primary providers and use the ambulance as a vehicle to get there because that is the way to the front of the line.

Aldersperson Bauer said his first reaction was this 20% was not enough. He said we need to visit this more often. He said he thought the mileage was too low and felt that 25% to 30% would be acceptable.

Aldersperson Neubauer said he was inclined to go 30%.

Aldersperson Paulsen said they need to make an adjustment and agreed with Aldersperson Bauer that they should make the bump and then put in an increase each year.

Aldersperson Kessler said that because we accept assignment for Medicare, we write off a certain percentage of the bill. She said that outsourcing the billing was a very good idea.

Aldersperson Taylor asked about duplication of efforts for outsourcing the billing.

Chief Riddle said that the duplication of effort occurs when they bring back the information to the Fire Secretary and she must get a release from the patient to get the billing information. He said that the hospital will not release the patient without that information.

Mayor Mundy said he was hearing that Council wanted more than a 20% increase.

Mr. Nicklas proposed 30% threshold for all but the ALS resident.

Aldersperson Bauer asked about the per mile rate.

Chief Riddle said it is not a significant part because they only average about 3 miles per run, but he suggested they would want to bring back a per mile rate of \$6.50.

Aldersperson Bauer suggested they add a column for ALS2.

Chief Riddle said that was included in the recommendation.

Mayor Mundy said he thought Mr. Nicklas had direction to come back with the 30% fee increase except for ALS resident and outsourcing the billing.

E. Consideration of an Administration Request for a Closed Session to Discuss Personnel Matters.

Motion

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

Voice vote

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

Motion

Aldersperson Paulsen moved to return to Open Session at 9:05 p.m. and Aldersperson Taylor seconded the motion.

Voice vote

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

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

APPOINTMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Aldersperson Kessler moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. and Aldersperson Paulsen seconded the motion.

Voice vote

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

Approve:

Mayor - Ken Mundy

Attest:

City Clerk – Candy Smith