
**SYCAMORE CITY COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF DECEMBER 1, 2008**

ROLL CALL

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

INVOCATION

Mayor Mundy asked for a moment of silent reflection.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion

Alderperson Neubauer moved to approve the agenda and Alderperson Stowe seconded the motion.

Voice vote

Mayor Mundy called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderpersons voted aye. Motion carried 6 - 0.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

Mike Fogelsanger, 845 Sunset Ln., said while the tax rate is going down the tax bill is going up and in these tough economic times he asked Council to tighten their belts and live within their means. He said the City should provide for fire, police, and streets and sanitation. He asked Council to keep the taxes the same as last year.

Alderperson Knuth arrived at 7:03 pm.

Carolyn McBride, 1793 Briggs St., said she was concerned about raising taxes and said that taxes have been horrendous for a long time. She said her husband has just lost his job and before that worked without a raise for 6 years. She said she does not think people can stand more tax raises and asked Council to reconsider raising taxes.

Lisa Vuchel, 434 S. California St., said she was a blue collar worker that depends on blue collar workers and she owns her own home and will have trouble if property taxes are raised. She said she moved here 8 years ago from Claridon Hills where the taxes have doubled and asked Council not to raise the taxes.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the Minutes for the Regular City Council Meeting of November 17, 2008.
- B. Payment of the Bills for December 1, 2008 in the amount of \$4,049,082.80.

Motion

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

Voice vote

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

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND BILLS.

- A. Proclamation declaring the month of December 2008 as Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month in the City of Sycamore, Illinois.
- B. Introduction of John Husk of Elburn Cooperative Co., 108 N. Main Street, by Mayor Ken Mundy of Sycamore's Economic Development Committee. Mr. Husk will briefly describe his firm's services.

John Husk said the company started in Elburn in 1921, have about 85 full-time and 25 part-time employees, and recently moved their administration office to Sycamore.

- C. Introduction of new paid-on call college interns Trevor Chilton, Tim Getzelman, and Erik Selig.

Chief Riddle introduced the college interns and noted that Trevor Chilton graduated from DeKalb High School and attends NIU, Tim Getzelman was in the KEC program through Sycamore High School and now attends Kishwaukee College, and Erik Selig graduated from Sycamore High School, served 4 years in the Army, and attends NIU.

Mayor Mundy encouraged residents to shop locally.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

Manager – Bill Nicklas reserved his comments for agenda items.

Engineer – John Brady, Sycamore Municipal Engineering, reported that this week work has started on the third and final phase of Stonegate.

Building & Zoning – Lyle Doty said his department performed a rough inspection of the DeKalb Clinic earlier in the day and the building is closed in.

Fire Chief – Bill Riddle reported that this past month the Fire Department received notification that the ISO classification has decreased from 5 to 4 and the rural areas decreased from 10 to 8. He explained that this was an improvement and the inspector was impressed with the professionalism of the staff of the Fire and Water Departments that he worked with.

Treasurer/Asst. City Manager – Brian Gregory said there were 16 Real Estate Transfer Stamps totaling \$19,070 in the month of November. He said that was one-half of those sold in November 2007.

Police Chief – Don Thomas said the rate of DUI's has dropped from 55% to 40% and said there is a 100% no-tolerance policy for drunk driving. Chief Thomas reminded residents of the snow ordinance that states that cars must not park on the street after two inches of snow.

Public Works Director – Fred Busse reminded residents that a City ordinance prohibits blowing or shoveling snow into City streets. He explained that leaving the center row of snow in the center of the downtown streets allows for more efficient snow removal.

Assistant Public Works Director – Ebe Smith reported a leaking fire hydrant at Somonauk and Ottawa would be repaired this week. He said they would be dealing with a large 100-year-old storm system made out of limestone.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance – no report
Public Safety – no report
Public Works – no report

PUBLIC HEARING

A. Public Hearing on the Proposed 2008 Corporate Levy.

Sarah Tobias, Sycamore Public Library Director, explained that the Library levy is part of the corporate levy and said that based on the current population of 14,866 their portion would amount to 15¢ per person per day. She said they have 22 employees and they are a lot busier because the economy is down.

Hearing no further comment, Mayor Mundy closed the public hearing.

ORDINANCES

A. Ordinance No. 2008.52—An Ordinance Levying Taxes for the Corporate Purposes of the City of Sycamore for the Fiscal Year Commencing May 1, 2009 and Ending April 30, 2010. First Reading.

City Manager Nicklas said in view of some of the anxieties and concerns expressed this evening he thought it might be useful to review the workshop discussion from the last meeting. He said it is not the intent of this Council to raise taxes and the proposed levy will not do that. He said that unfortunately the annual discussion of levies by local taxing bodies still carries a little bit of mystery because the tax bill has no mention of levies. He said the proposed tax levy increase in this ordinance results in a 3% decrease in the tax rate. He said there are 7 taxing bodies that constitute the City of Sycamore's aggregate rate. He said the City share of the aggregate rate is just under 8% and there are no caps on the City's rates, but the City has chosen to levy below the rate of inflation for the previous year. He thought the rate would be around 58¢ per \$100 EAV and in 1998 the rate was \$1.24 per \$100 EAV. Mr. Nicklas said the increase in any dollars paid would not be the result of the City's levy, but might be influenced by the state multiplier, property improvements, and the township multiplier. He said the proposed 3 1/2% levy increase would result in a 3% tax rate decrease. Mr. Nicklas said there was a broadside that went out over the weekend that mistakenly noted that residents' taxes would increase \$429 and noted that there were examples on the tables in the back of the room and suggested contacting the assessors at the township and county levels.

Aldersperson Neubauer said he hoped the press and the audience was paying attention, because the total tax bill increase for the typical homeowner will be between \$3 and \$7.

Mayor Mundy said the annual City Newsletter has a graphic of a dollar bill split to show the percentage of each taxing body. He said that Council controls about 8% of the total property tax bill. He said over the weekend some shopkeepers talked about a green tax sheet and once he saw it he found there were several errors. He explained that the gasoline tax is a 2¢ per gallon tax and the Home Rule tax was increased 1/2% all to go to street maintenance. He said the City's proposed level tax levy reflects restraint and concern for

those who must pay the tax. He said his personal feeling was that they keep the level of tax levy as proposed in the ordinance.

Aldersperson Taylor said he is a taxpayer living in the same economy as everyone else here so it is not us against them it should be "we." He said the levy is a guaranteed amount the City knows will come in and we are unsure of what the other revenues might be. He said they are anticipating a reduction in sales tax. He said he desperately wants to increase the commercial and industrial tax base and one way of doing that is to keep the tax rate as low as possible. He said that we also have to maintain a fiscally strong and thriving City because he does not want to play catch up in two or three years.

Aldersperson Paulsen said he read an article where Pingree Grove was looking for a 275% increase in their levy, Gilberts a 17% increase, East and West Dundee a 20% increase, and Elgin 105% increase. He said West Dundee was raising their rate from 76¢ per \$100 EAV to 90¢ per \$100 EAV. He said that made Sycamore's 58¢ per \$100 EAV look very reasonable. He said he had asked City Manager Nicklas to provide the option of a 2 ½% increase in the levy and said it was not a huge difference from the 3 ½% increase.

Mr. Nicklas said the 2 1/2% increase reduced general operation dollars by about \$2,400.

Aldersperson Kessler said she did not want the City to get behind the 8 ball and emphasized that she wanted to maintain City services. She said each department has a Capital plan and the difference between 2% and 3% is a few dollars per household, but adds up to \$20,000 for the City. She said she would like to stick to the 3 ½% increase Council agreed upon at the last meeting.

Aldersperson Stowe said the City was criticized for not keeping up with street maintenance because of trying to keep taxes down. He said if we don't at least keep in line with inflation, we will fall behind in services. He said the retail environment is unknown, so we need to keep enough money for the basic services. He noted that free speech is a great thing, but it is a shame that it is not attached to getting things right. He asked the public to check with Council before assuming something they read is correct.

Aldersperson Neubauer said he was fine with 3 ½%, but would rather go with 2 ½%.

Aldersperson Paulsen said he thought 3 ½% was acceptable.

Aldersperson Knuth said he was fine with 3 ½%. He said a \$7 per year increase would amount to 2 cups of coffee. He said one of his big complaints was to fix the streets, sidewalks, and alleys. He said he had thought it was crazy to have to fix his own sidewalk. He said he has heard criticism of a previous mayor that bragged about keeping taxes low, but he never fixed infrastructure.

Alderspersons Taylor and Adee said they both agreed with 3 ½%.

Mayor Mundy said there is a statutory deadline in filing the levy with the County and asked for an official motion to determine the percentage of increase.

Motion

Aldersperson Paulsen moved to leave the levy increase as proposed and Aldersperson Taylor seconded the motion.

Roll call vote

Mayor Mundy called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Alderspersons Adee, Kessler, Knuth, Paulsen, Stowe, and Taylor voted aye with Aldersperson Neubauer voting nay. Motion carried 6 – 1.

- B. Ordinance No. 2008.53—An Ordinance Abating the Debt Service Levy for the General Obligation Bond Issue Series 2002 for the City of Sycamore, DeKalb County, Illinois for Fiscal Year 2009-2010. First Reading.
- C. Ordinance No. 2008.54—An Ordinance Abating the Debt Service Levy for the General Obligation Bond Issue Series 2003 for the City of Sycamore, DeKalb County, Illinois for Fiscal Year 2009-2010. First Reading.
- D. Ordinance No. 2008.55—An Ordinance Abating the Debt Service Levy for the General Obligation Bond Issue Series 2005 for the City of Sycamore, DeKalb County, Illinois for Fiscal Year 2009-2010. First Reading.
- E. Ordinance No. 2008.56—An Ordinance Abating the Debt Service Levy for the General Obligation Bond Series 2007 for the City of Sycamore, DeKalb County, Illinois for Fiscal Year 2009-2010. First Reading.
- F. Ordinance No. 2008.57—An Ordinance Abating Certain Real Estate Revenue Due for Property Owned by Tate & Lyle in the City of Sycamore, DeKalb County, Illinois for Fiscal Year 2009-2010. First Reading.
- G. Ordinance No. 2008.58—An Ordinance Abating Certain real Estate Revenue Due for Property Owned by Fullco Industries in the City of Sycamore, DeKalb County, Illinois for Fiscal Year 2009-2010. First Reading.
- H. Ordinance No. 2008.59—An Ordinance Revising Article 11, “Flood Control Regulations” of the City Code of the City of Sycamore, Illinois in its Entirety. First and Second Reading.

City Manager Nicklas explained that the City has an obligation to conform to the directives and guidelines of FEMA.

Motion

Aldersperson Stowe moved to hear Ordinance 2008.59 on first and second reading 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.

Motion

Aldersperson Paulsen moved to approve Ordinance 2008.59 and Aldersperson Neubauer seconded the motion.

Roll call vote

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

RESOLUTIONS

- A. Resolution No. 511—Granting a Utility License to Kelso-Burnet to Install Below- Ground Fiber Optic Facilities Within the City’s Public Rights-of-Way.

City Manager Nicklas said this agreement would extend the fiber line from the new DeKalb Clinic to Kishwaukee Hospital.

Motion

Aldersperson Paulsen moved to adopt Resolution 511 and Aldersperson Adee seconded the motion.

Roll call vote

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

CONSIDERATIONS - None

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

APPOINTMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Aldersperson Stowe moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 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.

Approve:

Mayor - Ken Mundy

Attest:

City Clerk – Candy Smith