City of Carthage, Missouri

CITY COUNCIL

December 13, 2022 - 6:30 PM
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MINUTES

The Carthage City Council met in regular session on the above date in the Council Chambers at 06:30 PM with Mayor Dan Rife presiding.

Fire Chief Ryan Huntley gave the invocation.

Police Chief Bill Hawkins led the flag salute.

The following Council Members answered roll call: Robin Harrison, Brandi Ensor, David Armstrong, Ceri Otero, Robin Blair, Alan Snow, Ed Hardesty, Tiffany Cossey, Mark Elliff. Council Member Trudy Blankenship was absent. City Administrator Greg Dagnan and City Attorney Nate Dally were also present.

The following Department Heads were present: Police Chief Bill Hawkins, Fire Chief Ryan Huntley, Public Works Director Zeb Carney, Assistant City Administrator Traci Cox, and City Clerk Miranda Deal.

Mr. Elliff made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Harrison, to approve the minutes of the November 22, 2022 Council Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

During Citizen's Participation, Abi Almandinger with Vision Carthage, presented their Quarter 4 projects that they have been working on. These projects included a planting day after the Maple Leaf Festival, the light tunnel, lights on all the buildings on the square, and Hometown Holidays.

Katie Fields, the City's new Tourism Director, presented items she has been working on recently and some upcoming projects with surrounding cities and counties. The City is now the DMO for Carthage, she recently completed a tourism guide which has been distributed at various locations, and the Experience Carthage MO website is up and running and since September, it has seen almost 2000 viewers from 14 countries. There will also be an ad for Carthage in the Food & Travel magazine that is nationally known about. The cost will also include being featured on their website and social media for 3 months. There will be talks in the near future about planning something for the Route 66 centennial in 2026, that year will also be the 60th year for the Maple Leaf Festival.

Mr. Snow reported that the Budget Ways & Means Committee met on December 12. Council Bills 22-49 and 22-50 were discussed and forwarded to council. Council Bill 22-49 is for a new website service to replace CivicPlus beginning July 1, and 22-50 discusses the MOU with CWEP and the CEDC for the Economic Development Director. The committee also approved a 3% COLA for January 1, 2023, 1% of the COLA will go towards last December's CPI number and the other 2% will go towards this December's number which will come out in January. October's CPI number came out at 7.4, the November number isn't available yet. Mr. Snow made a motion, seconded by Ms. Otero to approve the 3% COLA effective January 1,

2023. Motion carried after a roll call vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Ayes: Armstrong, Blair, Cossey, Elliff, Ensor, Hardesty, Harrison, Otero, and Snow. The sales and use tax numbers are higher than projections and around 70% of the use tax that was projected for the year has already been received.

Mrs. Harrison reported that the Committee on Insurance, Audit & Claims met on this date and approved the claims. Also discussed was Council Bill 22-51 which requires department heads and salaried employees to give a 30-day notice for resignations. Council Bill 22-52 is just putting in writing that the exempt/salaried employees don't get extra paid time for holidays, they just get 8 hours for the holiday. The committee also cancelled the December 27 Insurance Audit & Claims meeting. The next meeting will be on January 10.

Mr. Elliff reported that the Public Safety Committee is between meetings with the next meeting scheduled for December 19.

Ms. Otero reported that the Public Service Committee is between meetings with the next meeting scheduled for December 20.

Mr. Armstrong reported that the Public Works Committee met on December 6. The City was awarded a grant to help pay for the bridge replacement on McGregor Street, that appears in Council Bill 22-55. There were two lot splits approved that appear in Resolutions 1990 and 1991. There is a Cub Cadet that the recycling center no longer uses and appears in Resolution 1992 as a surplus item. The new dump truck that was ordered finally arrived after a very long waiting period and it was in the Christmas Parade. There may need to be future discussions about Baker Boulevard and truck traffic, either the road will need to be widened into a potential 3 lane road or there will need to be signs prohibiting truck traffic. He also reported that the Krytek lumberyard did not have insurance so the costs will be billed to the property as a lien.

Special Committee and Board Liaison Reports were given by Mr. Elliff for the Jasper County Commission and the Planning, Zoning & Historic Preservation. Ms. Otero for the Carthage Humane Society, and Ms. Blair for the Carthage Tree Board.

Mayor Rife reported on the lighting of Sparkle in the Park, and the Christmas parade events. He also reminded Council that the CRM dinner is on Thursday.

Mr. Snow made a motion, seconded by Mr. Armstrong to cancel the December 27 Council Meeting due to the holidays. Motion carried.

During reports from Council Members, Mr. Armstrong thanked all the students in attendance for coming to the meeting, Ms. Otero thanked Katie for coming and presenting and also thanked her for all the hard work she went through to become the DMO for Carthage. Mr. Snow mentioned that Council Bill 22-49 was for a new website and app development from the company Apptegy, they reached out after discovering that we had CivicPlus, also he will be making a motion to amend Council Bill 22-50, the MOU with the CEDC, and Resolution 1993 when those come up.

City Attorney Nate Dally thanked Zeb for all the work his department has done throughout the year, which included finishing his new office space. He commented on the great Christmas Parade. He also updated the committee on the railroad lawsuit, oral arguments are set for January 10 and he will let the council know if it will be made available to watch online.

Police Chief Bill Hawkins reported that the parade went really well, the 47th annual Laverne Williams Christmas party was held on December 10. There are ongoing police car issues both with getting new cars and keeping the oldest cars running. He also reported that Officer Eckols has put in his resignation, and the LEST grant is due soon so he will be working on that.

Fire Chief Ryan Huntley reported that he also had someone resign recently, but they have found a replacement that will be starting on Thursday.

Public Works Director Zeb Carney reported that he is doing well with staffing at this time and he has had four guys complete the same day CDL program.

City Administrator Greg Dagnan reported that he will be sending out an MML webinar to the council regarding the marijuana legalization amendment that was recently passed. The distributors will have to collect a 3% tax, the City can get that 3% tax if it is sent to the voters and approved. He thanked Katie for her work on the DMO. He also mentioned the error on Resolution 1993, there was an email with the correct amount that was approved and it was missed when preparing the Resolution. He also mentioned that the budget committee has many questions on the new website contract which were hopefully answered with the email he had sent out, and that the City had two floats in the Christmas parade.

The Committee on Claims filed a report in the amount of $4,290,534.77 against the following funds: General Revenue $408,164.10, Public Health $188,811.66, Lodging $8,133.54, Parks/Stormwater $311,360.78, Golf $55,773.33, Parks & Recreation $1,275.46, Myers Park $2,357.50, Public Facilities $29,974.06, ARPA $124,088.45, Public Library $25,000.00, Payroll $635,595.89, and Carthage Water & Electric $2,500,000.00. Mrs. Harrison made a motion, seconded by Ms. Blair, to accept the report and allow the claims. Motion carried.

There was no Old Business.

Under new business, C.B. 22-48 -- An Ordinance amending the Annual Operating and Capital Budget of the City of Carthage for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 for specified funds (General Fund, Fire Protection Tax Fund, Parks/Stormwater Sales Tax Fund and Civic Enhancement Fund) for carry-over items and emergency purchases; and to be considered an emergency ordinance due to unforeseen circumstances which delay would hinder the effective delivery of Municipal Service was placed on first reading.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion, seconded by Mr. Snow, to follow emergency protocol and advance Council Bill 22-48 to second reading. Motion carried.

C.B. 22-48 -- An Ordinance amending the Annual Operating and Capital Budget of the City of Carthage for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 for specified funds (General Fund, Fire Protection Tax Fund, Parks/Stormwater Sales Tax Fund and Civic Enhancement Fund) for carry-over items and emergency purchases; and to be considered an emergency ordinance due to unforeseen circumstances which delay would hinder the effective delivery of Municipal Service was placed on second reading.

Ms. Deal mentioned that this Council Bill needed to be amended prior to being approved, the amended version was on everyone's desk. The appropriation under Section IV-Civic Enhancement Fund, is to be moved to the Parks/Stormwater Sales Tax Fund in Section III. There will be nothing under the Civic Enhancement Fund.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliff to amend Council Bill 22-48 to remove Section IV-Civic Enhancement Fund, the appropriation under that Fund is to be added to the Parks/Stormwater Sales Tax Fund in Section III. Motion carried.

C.B. 22-48 was passed as amended after a roll call vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Ayes: Robin Harrison, Brandi Ensor, David Armstrong, Ceri Otero, Robin Blair, Alan Snow, Ed Hardesty, Tiffany Cossey, and Mark Elliff. The Council Bill was approved and numbered Ordinance 22-48.

C.B. 22-49 -- An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to execute a Master Service Agreement, and Statement of Work (SOW) for Apptegy Website Services, 2201 Brookwood Drive, Suite 115, Little Rock, AR 72202 was placed on first reading with no action taken.

Mr. Armstrong mentioned that if this Council Bill were to be advanced to second reading and passed tonight, the company has offered a reduced price for signing before the end of December.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Harrison, to suspend the rules and forward Council Bill 22-49 to second reading. Motion carried.

C.B. 22-49 -- An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to execute a Master Service Agreement, and Statement of Work (SOW) for Apptegy Website Services, 2201 Brookwood Drive, Suite 115, Little Rock, AR 72202 was placed on second reading.

Ms. Otero mentioned that she had reviewed the email that was sent out and just wants to make sure that if there is a change to website providers, that the right company is chosen so there isn't a lot of switching between providers. Mr. Snow mentioned that the website we are currently paying for is not working properly and that the City needed a website that functioned properly all the time. Mr. Armstrong said that the current site being paid for is for the flashiness, the new site looks to be utilitarian which is better than what the City originally had, but not better than the current. The council needs to decide if they want pretty or functional and what the value of each of those is and what is willing to be spent. Mr. Hardesty brought up the app that will be offered with the new company and that the big thing for the public is the ease of use, something that is understandable and something that is easy to get information to and from the public. Ms. Cossey asked what is not currently working on the website, Mr. Dagnan mentioned that the agendas and minutes are not appearing properly and that citizens shouldn't have to search multiple places to get the information. The app with the current site refers people back to the website, the new company, Apptegy, builds their app out separately from the website so it will be easier to use with mobile devices. Mr. Snow said that if the contract is approved and signed, they would be building out the website and getting everything ready so the websites can be switched July 1 after our current contract expires. Ms. Ensor asked what the contract length is with Apptegy, Mr. Snow said it was a 1 year contract with the option of a 1 year renewal. Mr. Dagnan told the Council that Apptegy said anything our current site is doing, they can also do with the exception of Civic Clerk, most cities choose to keep the Civic Clerk portion and switch to Apptegy for the other stuff.

C.B. 22-49 was passed after a roll call vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Ayes: Robin Harrison, Brandi Ensor, David Armstrong, Ceri Otero, Robin Blair, Alan Snow, Ed Hardesty, Tiffany Cossey, and Mark Elliff. The Council Bill was approved and numbered Ordinance 22-49.

Mr. Hardesty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Armstrong, to take a 10 minute recess. Motion carried at 7:30 pm.

Once everyone returned, Mayor Rife called the meeting to order at 7:37 pm.

C.B. 22-50 -- An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to execute a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Carthage, the Carthage Economic Development Corporation, and the Carthage Water and Electric Plant to agree upon the general terms and commit to the financial terms of the agreement was placed on first reading.

Mr. Snow made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliff to amend the Responsibilities and Obligations of the Parties paragraph 2 to state that the City would pay $20,000 in FY 23, $70,000 in FY 24, and $70,000 in FY 25. Motion carried.

C.B. 22-51 -- An Ordinance to amend Section 200 - General Employment Policies of the Personnel Policy Manual of the City of Carthage by amending subsection 207 - Resignation and Retirement was placed on first reading with no action taken.

Ms. Ensor asked if there was a penalty for not following the new policy, Mr. Dagnan mentioned that it would just affect their status to be rehired.

C.B. 22-52 -- An Ordinance to amend Section 503 - Holidays Authorized of the Personnel Policy Manual of the City of Carthage by amending Subsection 09 and adding Subsection 10 was placed on first reading with no action taken.

C.B. 22-53 -- An Ordinance rezoning certain property at 828 and 830 West Fairview in the City of Carthage from District A, to District F, Light Industrial, as requested by Philip K and Sharon R Brown, in the City of Carthage, Missouri was placed on first reading with no action taken.

C.B. 22-54 -- An Ordinance of the City of Carthage, Missouri authorizing the Mayor to execute an Agreement between the City of Carthage, Missouri and the Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission to provide funding for ADA compliant sidewalks and crossings on HH Highway from Steadley Elementary to Creekside Subdivision, in the City of Carthage, Missouri was placed on first reading with no action taken.

Mr. Armstrong thanked City officials and Zeb for pursuing these grants every year.

C.B. 22-55 -- An Ordinance of the City of Carthage, Missouri authorizing the Mayor to execute an Agreement between the City of Carthage, Missouri and the Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission providing replacement of Bridge #0720005 on McGregor Street over Missouri/Northern Arkansas Railroad was placed on first reading with no action taken.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion, seconded by Mr. Snow, to approve the Mayor's reappointment of Steve Cottrell and Steve Weldon to the Civil War Museum Board until December 2025. Motion carried.

Mr. Armstrong mentioned that he has worked with these gentlemen for a long time and believes that they are a great asset and the City is lucky to have them.

Mr. Elliff made a motion, seconded by Mr. Snow, to approve the Mayor's reappointment of John H. Patrick to the Police Personnel Administration Board until December 2026. Motion carried.

Ms. Blair made a motion, seconded by Mr. Armstrong, to approve the Mayor's appointment of Jason Cutler to the Carthage Tree Board until December 2023. Motion carried.

Mr. Hardesty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Snow, to approve the Mayor's appointment of Abi Almandinger as the Parks and Recreation Director effective December 28, 2022. Motion carried with 8 yeas, Mr. Elliff abstained.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Harrison, to approve Resolution 1990 -- A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Carthage amending an Administrative Lot Split for property located at 415 N. Parsons Street, in the City of Carthage, Missouri. Resolution 1990 was adopted after a roll call vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Ayes: Robin Harrison, Brandi Ensor, David Armstrong, Ceri Otero, Robin Blair, Alan Snow, Ed Hardesty, Tiffany Cossey, and Mark Elliff.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion, seconded by Ms. Ensor, to approve Resolution 1991 -- A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Carthage amending an Administrative Lot Split for property located at 3002 Grand Ave, in the City of Carthage, Missouri. Resolution 1991 was adopted after a roll call vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Ayes: Robin Harrison, Brandi Ensor, David Armstrong, Ceri Otero, Robin Blair, Alan Snow, Ed Hardesty, Tiffany Cossey, and Mark Elliff.

Mr. Elliff made a motion, seconded by Mr. Armstrong, to approve Resolution 1992 – A Resolution approving the declaration as surplus to the City's needs and authorizing the disposition of a 2008 Cub Cadet 4x+B35:H354 EFI Tracker Utility Vehicle, Serial No. 1E22BG400031. Resolution 1992 was adopted after a roll call vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Ayes: Robin Harrison, Brandi Ensor, David Armstrong, Ceri Otero, Robin Blair, Alan Snow, Ed Hardesty, Tiffany Cossey, and Mark Elliff.

Resolution 1993 -- A Resolution approving the recommendation of the McCune-Brooks Regional Hospital Trust for the distribution of funds ($2,000,000) from the Restricted Trust Fund to Missouri Southern Foundation.

Mr. Snow made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Harrison, to amend Resolution 1993 to the amount of $75,000 for 5 years. Motion carried.

Ms. Otero was concerned at where the discrepancy came from. Mr. Dagnan stated that the application was for two-million, but the Board only approved $75,000 for 5 years which was written in an email that City Hall staff missed when preparing the Resolution. Mr. Armstrong stated he would be voting no to this because it exceeds the mandate of the trust, and that the money should be designated for our community and not others. The trust should not be allowed to send money outside of Carthage and he urges others to vote against this with him to send a message to outside organizations who ask the trust for money. Mrs. Harrison rebutted Mr. Armstrong and stated at the meeting it was presented that 13% of the graduates in the health science program are Carthage alumni and residents. Ms. Otero stated that Missouri Southern is the closest university to us and that this was a great opportunity to help the community. Mr. Hardesty agreed with Mr. Armstrong in that it doesn't follow the wording interpretation of the trust and this money is meant to benefit the citizens of Carthage. Mr. Snow stated he believes this is a better benefit to the community than some of the other requests that have been received by the trust and that this will have a bigger impact. Ms. Cossey stated she believes it fits the wording of the trust agreement, but she has other concerns.

Ms. Otero made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Harrison to adopt the amended resolution.

Ms. Cossey voiced her concerns with the lack of funding and what will happen if they don't meet the requirements for the building renovations. Brad Hodson with Missouri Southern was present to answer her question. He stated that they currently have $6.5 million raised towards the project and they still have other organizations to ask for funding, this is a State match project, so Missouri Southern needs to raise $15 million and the State will contribute the other $15 million. The university has 5 years to meet the $15 million match. Ms. Cossey asked about the number of nurses this would create. Mr. Hodson stated that the State Board of Nursing determines the cohort numbers, they are hoping to get approved for 30 more spots to get a total of 60 per year and also offer 2 and 4 year nursing degree options with State approval. There were questions on the number of students turned away from the nursing program, Mr. Hodson stated that there are far more than 30 and 60 pre-nursing majors, so there are plenty of students to fill the spots should they become available. There were also questions about how many of the 13% of Carthage alumni/residents actually return to Carthage to work, the university tries to get a first year destination survey from students to try and determine that amount. Mr. Armstrong asked about the budget cuts that the university went through and how that will affect the new building, Mr. Hodson stated that they are able to take care of the current things they have and they are working on a better plan for the future to make sure they are able to sustain everything they have. Ms. Cossey asked if the program is self-supporting, Mr. Hodson explained that everything is under one operating budget and some programs do make more than others and help fund the other programs. They would need to add 3-4 faculty members for a second cohort of students.

Resolution 1993 was adopted after a roll call vote of 7 yeas and 2 nays. Ayes: Robin Harrison, Brandi Ensor, Ceri Otero, Robin Blair, Alan Snow, Tiffany Cossey, and Mark Elliff. Nays: David Armstrong and Ed Hardesty.

During Closing Comments, Holiday wishes were extended to all, as well as happy birthday wishes to the Mayor. Mr. Hardesty stated that he was proud of the organizations that the City has like Vision Carthage and Experience Carthage. Mr. Elliff thanked Katie for coming to the meeting and presenting and congratulated Abi on her appointment. Ms. Ensor thanked everyone for their wisdom and all of the questions to help her understand things better. Ms. Otero encouraged someone in Ward 3 to run for City Council since she is not choosing to seek reelection in April. Ms. Blair seconded Ms. Ensor's point with the wisdom and questions and congratulated Abi. Mr. Snow congratulated the City Hall float for winning Director's Choice in the Christmas Parade and congratulated Public Works for receiving their new dump truck and having it in the parade as well. He also congratulated Abi on her appointment.

Mr. Snow made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hardesty, to adjourn the regular session of the Council Meeting. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 8:13 pm.