



City of Carthage, Missouri

CITY COUNCIL

October 10, 2023 - 6:30 PM
CW&EP COMMUNITY ROOM

MINUTES

The Carthage City Council met in regular session on the above date in the CW&EP Community Room 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: Brandi Ensor, Chris Taylor, Trudy Blankenship, David Armstrong, Robin Blair, Terri Heckmaster, Alan Snow, Mark Elliff, Tiffany Cossey. Absent: Ed Hardesty

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, Parks & Recreation Director Abi Almandinger, Assistant City Administrator Traci Cox, City Clerk Miranda Deal and Deputy City Clerk Amy Taylor.

Mr. Elliff made a motion, seconded by Mr. Snow, to approve the minutes of the September 26, 2023 Council Meeting.

Ms. Ensor made a motion, seconded by Ms. Blair, to amend the minutes to clarify in the Remarks from Council to read that Ms. Blair was inquiring why the meeting in progress on September 26th couldn't be moved to Memorial Hall. All aye. Motion carries.

Mr. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Mr. Taylor, to accept the minutes as amended. All aye. Motion carries.

During Citizen's Participation, Jack Crusa, 701 E. Highland, stated that he is concerned about the forensic audit update. He stated that he contacted a former judge who states the report says nothing about a crime being committed. He questions why it was reported a crime has been committed, and feels the audit should be complete and input from the prosecutor should be gained before this determination is made. He questions whether there was pressure to make the statement, and from whom.

Bill Putnam, 624 Belle Air, thanked CW&EP for the use of the Community Room, and the Council for being willing to move meetings to allow for larger quarters. Mr. Putnam introduced his grandson, Walker, who is currently working toward becoming an Eagle Scout, joining the ranks of Mayor Rife and Attorney Dally. He is obtaining his Communication Merit badge by attending a City Council meeting. Mr. Putnam thanked Public Works Director Zeb Carney and Public Works for the work done on the center parkway at Belle Air and Euclid, and his help in

getting a dead tree down and a stump removed. He also thanked the Council for putting funds in the budget this year for a dog park.

Mr. Snow reported the Budget Ways & Means Committee met October 9th and discussed the MOU with CEDC for the management of the industrial park land, which is on the agenda as C.B 23-71 for first reading. Questions were answered by Jeff Meredith about the management plan. Also discussed was a Programs Budget adjustment for the Parks and Rec department, which will start having youth baseball, and possibly dance and painting classes, etc. There was no budget for these programs. The committee approved a \$25,000 budget which will be coming to Council in the future for budget adjustment approval. He reported retail sales tax is down this month, which helps fund Storm Water and Parks, among other programs. The use tax is up again, above budgeted revenues. The next meeting will be November 13th at 5:30.

Ms. Blair reported that the Committee on Insurance met on this day and approved claims. Discussed was the letter Mayor Rife sent to CW&EP and Council about the combined committee to be formed to aid in the CW&EP salary study, and proceeding with Lockton to complete the study. Also discussed by Mayor Rife was the committee will be formed with equal members from CW&EP and the City, and that the committee will aid in the salary study along with the full Council. A meeting between CW&EP and City Council is tentatively planned for November 28th. It was discussed whether to have the meeting during the Council meeting, or to adjourn to a work session to allow for more flexibility in communication. It was suggested that a moderator be present, and that an agenda be made and distributed to both CW&EP and the City as soon as possible to allow for preparation. Ms. Blair made a motion, seconded by Mr. Taylor, to allow Mayor Rife to move forward in appointing the joint committee, and accepting Lockton to complete the CW&EP salary study. Ms. Cossey stated the letter that was sent out mentioned it was going to be a committee made up of CW&EP board members and people from the City staff, and wanted to clarify if the committee would also include members of Council. Mayor Rife stated the committee will be comprised of Council and staff from the City, and Board members and staff from CW&EP. All aye. Motion carries. She reported that Ms. Cox and HR Coordinator Michael Miller will be meeting with Beindiek Insurance Agency to review the renewals of the employee health insurance. Also discussed was Ms. Cossey wanting clarification as to when the Council can expect more information about the forensic audit. City Administrator Greg Dagnan said a meeting is scheduled for Friday, and there is some discussion on meeting with them before the audit is complete. The next meeting is October 24th at 5:30.

Mr. Elliff reported the Public Safety Committee is between meeting. The next meeting is October 16th at 5:30.

Ms. Blankenship reported the Public Service Committee met in a Special Meeting October 3rd. They approved the purchase of crushed lava, and chemicals for the golf course for the season. The next regular scheduled meeting is October 17th at 5:30.

Mr. Armstrong reported the Public Works Committee met October 3rd. Discussed was a garbage service fee increase, which is on the agenda as Council Bill 23-73. Also discussed was the comprehensive plan from Planning and Zoning. The committee wanted more time review, so it will be discussed again in the next meeting. If there are any recommended changes, it will be sent back to Planning and Zoning, however, if the Committee is satisfied with the changes that have been made, it will be forwarded to Council. A contract for the 3rd Street Bridge was tentatively accepted, which is on the agenda as C.B. 23-71. Also discussed was a letter for tax credit financing for Highland Acres and Highland Meadows, which is on the agenda as Resolution 2012. Mr. Armstrong reported the HVAC issue in Council Chambers at

City Hall has been resolved by the replacement of the air conditioning unit at a cost of \$8,900.00. The next meeting is October 17th at 5:30.

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

Mayor Rife reported that he attended the Hispanic Heritage Festival at Kellogg Lake and presented the Hispanic Heritage Month Proclamation to them at that time. He reported the festival was very good and is getting bigger every year. He encourages everyone to attend.

During Remarks from Council Members Mr. Armstrong stated he has been to The Bistro and highly recommends the lemon cheesecake and carrot cake, and Mr. Taylor stated he recommends the macaroni and cheese and brisket. Mr. Armstrong stated the award given for the remodel of the building was well earned and that it is a highlight on Garrison Street. He also stated he really feels great about the dog park, stating his first week on council he received a call about the City getting a dog park. He also stated there are 92 people in attendance and thanked CW&EP for the use of the space, and that he believes the space looks great. Ms. Heckmaster thanked CW&EP for the use of the room, and acknowledged Pat Goff and Danny Lambeth for their service to CW&EP.

City Attorney Nate Dally stated the City has a long history with Eagle Scouts and currently there are several Eagle Scouts within the various City departments. He stated that becoming an Eagle Scout is something that not a lot of those who start are able to get to, and that it is an accomplishment that deserves recognition. He also commented on the letters from the auditors and said he has never seen an auditor make a declaration of a criminal act, and that it is more a tool for the police to use in the issue. He stated he believed there was a committee who were wishing to review the reports as well as interview the auditors, which pushed Police Chief Hawkins to report they are investigation reports at this point. He also commented that there is work being done on a loitering and camping policy which will go to the next Public Safety meeting. He also discussed updating the panhandling ordinance. He stated that he has also had cheesecake from The Bistro and it was delicious.

Mayor Rife commended Walker on his achievement and progress on his work toward Eagle Scout. He stated that it is one thing he himself did at the age of 14 that he still uses on his resume today. He offered his congratulations to Walker.

Police Chief Bill Hawkins thanked Mr. Dally for his summation of the letter regarding the forensic audit which was sent to Council. He stated it is an ongoing investigation, that the information is not for public release and this time, and the he wrote the letter about the forensic audit because it needed to be written.

Fire Chief Ryan Huntley reported the hiring of two fire department employees who will start November 2nd pending passing the required physical. He reported working on and making progress on the new fire engine. He says that if progress continues as planned, they hope to have a brand new engine in the house by the end of February.

Parks and Recreation Director Abi Almandinger reported that the purchase of portable mounds was also discussed at the special Public Services meeting, for use with the Little League program. She stated the boulders for the Kellogg Lake playground have been on hold, but should be coming back into action next week. She stated Central park playground equipment has been removed and donated to another community that was in need. Within the next few

months, Griggs Park playground equipment will also be removed as it is also being replaced. She reported she is happy to see all the progress being made with the playgrounds. She said the Parks Department is currently working with two potential Eagle Scouts, and that word is getting out that the department will take any and all potential Eagle Scouts and their projects. She stated the department received a \$10,000 Steadley Grant for use on the dog park, and that potential Eagle Scout Walker is leading the way for the agility equipment for the animals. She stated they are excited to be working with Walker, and are very appreciative to Steadley Trust for the grant.

Assistant City Administrator Traci Cox reported the retail sales tax is up for the month at 4.7%, however the Year to Date is down approximately \$28,000. The Use Tax continues to come in strong. The Use Tax this time last year was approximately \$280,000, and this year it has already brought in approximately \$495,000. She stated Use Taxes are up substantially and encourages everyone to shop locally to boost the sales tax. She stated the City has received their first grant reimbursement check from the McCune-Brooks Regional Hospital Trust Fund for progress on the Parks Master Plan for approximately \$821,000.00, and states the City is very thankful for their generosity and support of the Parks system.

City Administrator Greg Dagnan reported the Forensic Auditor and the Police are meeting frequently and there is information that is not available to the Council or the public at this time. He said there was a specific request for a committee to meet with the auditors. The auditors said they were willing to meet, but were not comfortable meeting with the committee due to the questions that might be asked that should not be public knowledge due to the ongoing criminal investigation. They then wrote the letter that was an item in tonight's Council packet as a compromise to the request of the meeting. He stated Chief Hawkins wanted to be sure people understood there is much information the public does not know, which is part of the investigation, that does not need to be out until the auditors are finished with the investigation and the police decide what they're going to do with it. He also reported the staff worked on the proposal for CW&EP salary study. There is also work being done on a uniform purchasing policy, so all departments can buy supplies from the same supplier to help save money for the City. There will be an RFP to obtain bids for this policy. He had an interview with the auditor from KPM and feels the City's annual audit went well. He says the City should hear from them in writing soon with the results of the audit. Mr. Dagnan reported he, the Economic Development Director, and Zeb Carney have met and there are a lot of Economic Development projects currently going on that the public may not know about because they aren't allowed to disclose them, but they do meet quite frequently on several projects that are ongoing. He reported there has been a class action settlement on opioids, with the opioid company providers. All cities who are part of the suit will receive a settlement check as a result. There are restrictions as to how this money can be used, and there is no word of how much the City will receive. He also mentioned the marijuana tax will begin being collected this month, and the City should receive the first check in November.

The Committee on Claims filed a report in the amount of \$3,003,576.37 against the following funds: General Revenue \$541,068.89, Public Health \$4,973.39, Lodging \$1,256.05, Parks/Stormwater \$2,033.00, Fire Protection \$1,176.00, Golf \$16,210.16, Capital Improvements \$13,154.63, Use Tax \$8,691.18, Public Facilities \$11,298.00, ARPA \$11,020.80, Library \$25,000, Payroll \$367,694.27, and Carthage Water and Electric \$2,000,000.00. Ms. Blair made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cossey, to accept the report and allow the claims. Motion carries.

Under New Business, C.B. 23-71 -- An Ordinance to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding Agreement with the Carthage Economic Development Corporation (CEDC), for the purchase and development of an industrial park, in the City of Carthage, Missouri was placed on first reading with no action taken.

C.B. 23-72 -- 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 on 3rd Street over a tributary of Spring River #0720003 in the City of Carthage Missouri was placed on first reading with no action taken.

C.B. 23-73 -- An Ordinance adjusting the Solid Waste Collection Rates in the City of Carthage pursuant to the Contract Agreement entered into the 1st day of October 2019, by and between the City of Carthage, Missouri, a Municipal Corporation, and Republic Services of Galena, Kansas was placed on first reading with no action taken.

Mr. Elliff made a motion, seconded by Mr. Taylor, to adopt Resolution 2011 - A Resolution authorizing a special use permit for the sale of liquor by the drink pursuant to Section 25-251 (18) for 1249 S. Garrison Ave, in the City of Carthage, Missouri. Resolution 2011 was adopted after a roll call vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Ayes: Brandi Ensor, Chris Taylor, Trudy Blankenship, David Armstrong, Robin Blair, Terri Heckmaster, Alan Snow, Mark Elliff, and Tiffany Cossey.

Ms. Ensor made a motion, seconded by Mr. Taylor, to adopt Resolution 2012 - A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Carthage, Missouri supporting an application by Preservation of Affordable Housing, Inc., for Missouri Housing Development Commission funding for low income housing tax credits and tax-exempt mortgage financing for renovations to Highland Acres and Highland Meadows. Resolution 2012 was adopted after a roll call vote of 8 yeas and 1 abstain. Ayes: Brandi Ensor, Chris Taylor, Trudy Blankenship, David Armstrong, Robin Blair, Terri Heckmaster, Alan Snow, and Tiffany Cossey. Abstain: Mark Elliff

During Closing Comments, Mr. Snow mentioned this is the first month of the marijuana tax, and is excited to see what the tax will bring in for the City. He also wanted to again recognize the Carthage High School soccer team. He stated they have still only lost one game and are having a great season, mentioning that one of the players has a set a new single-season assist record for the high school. Ms. Cossey wanted to be sure everyone knows the Carthage High School debate team is having their first debate tournament this weekend in Carthage. She also thanked CW&EP for hosting the meeting and the nice setup they provided. She thanked the audience for their attendance. Ms. Ensor asked how many are viewing the live stream. Michael Keith, head of IT, stated there were 30 viewers. She congratulated Walker and told him she is very proud of him. She stated she is happy he had input on the dog park. Mr. Taylor stated he is also an Eagle Scout and congratulated Walker on his achievements so far stating he knows how hard it is to get that far. He also thanked CW&EP for the awesome job with the meeting and thanked the audience for their attendance. Ms. Blankenship stated she was born in this building, and thanked CW&EP for the use of the space. Mr. Armstrong stated there has been nothing of controversy tonight so he wanted to point out that not all are Eagles Scouts, but that he was a Royal Ambassador, and the he is a proud crusader of the Royal Ambassadors. Ms. Blair expressed her gratitude to CW&EP for their hospitality and the audience for their participation. Ms. Heckmaster mentioned that Maple Leaf is next week and there are many people working hard on the parade and other activities, and offered her thanks to them. She encourages everyone to go to Maple Leaf and have fun.

Ms. Heckmaster made a motion, seconded by Ms. Ensor, to adjourn the regular session of the Council Meeting. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Dan Rife, Mayor

Miranda Deal, City Clerk