City of Carthage, Missouri

CITY COUNCIL

November 28, 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, Jeff Hole, Alan Snow, Mark Elliff, and Tiffany Cossey. 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 Admin Coordinator Julie Tilley, 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 Ms. Ensor, to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2023 Council Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

During Citizen's Participation, Vickie Ziler, 3265 Nutmeg Road, Golden City, discussed the purpose and use of the Safe Haven Baby Box, and stated the intention to fund raise for the funds needed in order to install the box at Fire Station 2. She stated there is a $500 annual fee for inspection of the boxes, which she anticipates will also be covered by the fund raising effort. She also discussed the Safe Haven hotline, response time, and billboards. Ms. Blair asked about options to promote the hotline without the installation of the box. Ms. Ziler indicated a billboard could possibly be installed to promote this. Mr. Taylor asked why Carthage was selected for the baby boy. Ms. Ziler indicated some Carthage citizens have indicated their interest in the box, and their desire to donate to the installation. Fire Chief Huntley stated the installation of the box will in no way interfere with their daily duties or job requirements.

Jeff Meredith, Carthage Economic Development Corporation, stated the CEDC is still in the progress of purchasing industrial land near Mercy Hospital, with an anticipated closing date in mid-January. The land will be owned by the city, with the CEDC being the guarantor for the loan to complete the purchase. The land will be used as collateral to secure the loan. Funds for the purchase are coming from CW&EP, City of Carthage, and $2,800,000 in grant money from the State of Missouri, the Steadley Trust, and the USDA. Preliminary road and waste water engineering has been received for the sight, which will aid in obtaining additional grant money for the purchase. The CEDC and Zanevan Engineering is currently working with MODoT to get the needed approvals for the entrances to the business park. The CEDC is working to obtain funding for a housing study to give to developers and builders. He mentioned Resolution 2019, which is on the agenda, for the writing of a grant request in the amount of $750,000.00, to be used to fix the sidewalks branching out from the square. There will be a public hearing on December 14th about this project. He reported meeting with several local businesses about incentivizing job creation in two different companies.

Mark Peterson, 2121 Laura, spoke of his previous job duties and agreements with the City of Carthage during his employment. He also discussed the charges pending against him.

Bill Putnam, 624 Belle Air Place, stated he has requested closed session minutes pertaining to the hiring of the City Administrator, and asked the Mayor about the hiring committee that was in place during the hiring.

Patrick Scott, spoke about a past investigation from the 1990s that City Administrator Greg Dagnan worked on, and quoted lines from a book written after the investigation.

Mr. Snow reported the Budget Ways & Means Committee is between meetings. The next meeting will be December 11th at 5:30.

Ms. Blair reported the Committee on Insurance met on this day and approved claims. She reported that Ms. Cox has negotiated a 2.99% rate increase for the renewal of the employee health plans. Ms. Blair made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cossey, to remain with Anthem for employee health coverage. Motion carries. She also stated Ms. Cox reported improved measures for checks and balances within the City to ensure proper cash handling. The next meeting will be December 12th at 5:30.

Mr. Elliff reported the Public Safety Committee met November 20th. He reported the request that the square be closed and vacated for the Christmas parade, December 4th, from 5 – 8 p.m. Mr. Elliff made a motion, seconded by Mr. Snow, to allow the closure of the square, December 4th from 5 – 8p. Motion carries. He also reported the requested closure of parts of Maple Street for the Hometown Holidays events on December 6 and 7. Mr. Elliff made a motion, seconded by Mr. Snow, close and vacate Maple Street between 6th Street and 7th Street & 6th Street between Maple and Lyon for the Hometown Holidays event, December 1, from 1 – 10 p.m. Also discussed was Run Through the Lights, to be held Tuesday, December 19. Mr. Elliff made a motion, seconded by Mr. Snow, for the closure of westbound Fairview traffic at Wynwood at 6:00pm, eastbound Fairview traffic at Grand at 6:00pm and close lights to vehicular traffic at 6:10 - open to pedestrians at 6:30pm. On December 19. Motion carries. Also discussed was an anonymous $6,000 donation to the Fire Department to use as they see fit, which is on the agenda as Resolution 2018. The next meeting is December 18th at 5:30.

Ms. Ensor reported the Public Service Committee met November 27th. She reported the discussion of signage for Carter Park which details the history of Carter Park and Jefferson Highway. Ms. Ensor made a motion, seconded by Ms. Blankenship, to allow the Jefferson Highway Association to erect the historical site sign in Carter Park. Motion carries. Also discussed was the CXT restroom at Fair Acres. Ms. Ensor made a motion, seconded by Ms. Blankenship, to accept the bid from CXT in the amount of $266,188.00 for ADA-compliant restrooms at Fair Acres. Motion carries. Also discussed was fencing for the dog park. Ms. Ensor made a motion, seconded by Mr. Taylor, to accept the bid from MW Fence, in the amount of $33,746.43, for the building of a two-pen, 6' foot black chain link fence to be placed at the dog park. Motion carries. Also discussed was preparation for the lava rock at the ball fields at Fair Acres. Ms. Ensor made a motion, seconded by Mr. Taylor, to accept the bid from Elements Construction in the amount of $25,415.00, for leveling and placement of the crushed lava and installing the stanchions at the Fair Acres baseball fields. Motion carries. Also discussed was the selling of a Toro Reelmaster Mower. Ms. Ensor made a motion, seconded by Ms. Heckmaster, to accept a bid of $3,000.00 from Center Creek Recreation for the Toro Reelmaster Mower. Motion carries. Also discussed was the need to purchase a new dump truck for the Parks Department. Ms. Ensor made a motion, seconded by Mr. Taylor, to accept a bid of $133,098.31 for the purchase a 2025 dump truck through Sourcewell. Motion carries. Also discussed was the scoreboard at Rock Stadium ballfields. Ms. Ensor made a motion, seconded by Ms. Blankenship, to accept the Nevco bid in the amount of $12,430.69 for the purchase of the scoreboard with amber/red LED lights to be placed at the Rock Stadium ballfields. Motion carries. The next meeting is December 19th at 5:30.

Mr. Armstrong reported that the Public Works Committee is between meetings. The next meeting will be December 5th at 5:30.

Special Committee and Board Liaison Reports were given by Ms. Heckmaster for Vision Carthage and Ms. Blair for the Humane Society.

Mayor Rife reported that he was present to flip the switch for Sparkle in the Park, and stated it was beautiful. He thanked CW&EP for their work in putting the display together. He encourages those who have not seen it, to do so.

During Remarks from Council Members, Mr. Snow spoke of his support for the Safe Haven Baby Box, and his hope that it will be a benefit to the community. Ms. Cossey discussed the charges pending against Mr. Peterson, and her belief the audit should have been discussed with the Council before charges were filed. She also discussed there being no vote to approve the City Administrator living outside the city limits. She thanked CW&EP for the use of the Community Room, and said she looks forward to moving the meetings back to Council Chambers. Mr. Elliff spoke of his support for the Safe Haven baby Box, and believes that if it saves even on child, it will be worth it.

City Attorney Nate Dally reported speaking with Mr. Meredith about the purchase of land for the industrial park, and that an appraisal is needed. He hopes to have this on the agenda for first reading at the next Council meeting. He also addressed the hiring of the City Administrator, and that Council was in compliance with the City Charter during the hiring. He spoke about the forensic audit, investigative report, and subsequent subpoenas. He discussed the land being purchased for the industrial park, and that the City will own the land, but the CEDC will hold a Deed of Trust. Any sale of said land will go through Council, if that need arises in the future.

Police Chief Bill Hawkins reported the investigation resulting from the forensic audit is still ongoing, with no status change since the last meeting. He stated the department has been busy with preparations for the LaVerne Williams Christmas Party. There will be a fundraiser for the party, held December 3, at the Lighthouse. Duke Mason will be holding a concert during the fundraiser, with all proceeds from the concert going to the childrens party hosted by the department every year. The party will be on December 9.

Fire Chief Ryan Huntley reported Dr. Brown will become the medical director for the department, and will help create EMT bags for placement on all trucks. This will allow the EMTs to provide better service. He hopes to have this in place by January 1.

Parks and Recreation Director Abi Almandinger discussed their new procedures for cash handling within all Parks Department divisions. She announced Kellogg Lake playground is open, and that work on Central Park playground is underway. She announced the classes being held at Memorial Hall have been very successful. She also sent condolences to the family of Mr. Marvin "Red" O'Dell, a long-time member of the golf course and former Parks employee. She announced the golf profit from July 2023 thru October 2023 was $139,518.

Assistant City Administrator Traci Cox reminded everyone that December 5 at 8 a.m. is the first day of candidacy filing for office, and runs through December 26 at 5 p.m. She stated City Hall will be closed December 22 – December 25 for the Christmas holiday.

City Administrator Greg Dagnan reported on the status of the RFP with Carthage Hardware, which is still in the works and an MOU is being created between the City and Carthage Hardware. He thanked Jeff Meredith for his suggestion of hiring a grant writer in order to apply for a CDBG grant, and explained the process which follows the grant writing. He asked Mr. Armstrong to discuss the updated Comprehensive Plan, which is on the agenda as C.B. 23-78, and how it effects the City and its structure. The current plan was passed in 2009. He also addressed the book Mr. Patrick read from during Citizen Participation.

The Committee on Claims filed a report in the amount of $6,581,564.82 against the following funds: General Revenue $268,762.05, Public Health $164,688.74, Lodging $19,075.34, Public Safety $298.01, Parks/Stormwater $122,866.45, Fire Protection $1,669.56, Golf $36,347.45 Capital Improvements $9,329.50, Myers Park $3,502.50, Use Tax $65,407.85, Public Facilities $11,785.00, ARPA $865.09, Library $25,000.00, Payroll $851,967.28, and Carthage Water and Electric $5,000,000.00. Ms. Blair made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cossey, to accept the report and allow the claims. Motion carried.

Under Old Business, C.B. 23-76 -- An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract with Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc., an Indiana Non-profit Corporation, to provide and install newborn safety devices, in the City of Carthage, Missouri was placed on second reading followed by a roll call vote of 7 yeas and 3 nays. Ayes: Brandi Ensor, Chris Taylor, Trudy Blankenship, Terri Heckmaster, Jeff Hole, Alan Snow, and Mark Elliff. Nays: David Armstrong, Robin Blair, and Tiffany Cossey. The Council Bill was approved and numbered Ordinance 23-81.

Under New Business, C.B. 23-77 -- An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract with ClearGov, Inc. to provide an annual subscription for ClearGov Inc. Budgeting software for the City of Carthage, Missouri was placed on first reading with no action taken.

C.B. 23-78 -- An Ordinance adopting amendments to the 2009 Comprehensive Plan, in the City of Carthage, Missouri placed on first reading with no action taken.

Mr. Elliff made a motion, seconded by Mr. Snow, to adopt Resolution 2018 -- A Resolution providing for the formal acceptance of an anonymous donation of $6,000.00 by the City Council of the City of Carthage, Missouri pursuant to City Policy. Resolution 2018 was adopted after a roll call vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Ayes: Brandi Ensor, Chris Taylor, Trudy

Blankenship, David Armstrong, Robin Blair, Terri Heckmaster, Jeff Hole, Alan Snow, Mark Elliff, and Tiffany Cossey.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion, seconded by Ms. Ensor, to adopt Resolution 2019 -- A Resolution of the City of Carthage, Missouri, authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with the Harry S. Truman Coordinating Council to write a Community Development Block Grant for Downtown Sidewalks, in the City of Carthage, Missouri. Resolution 2019 was adopted after a roll call vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Ayes: Brandi Ensor, Chris Taylor, Trudy Blankenship, David Armstrong, Robin Blair, Terri Heckmaster, Jeff Hole, Alan Snow, Mark Elliff, and Tiffany Cossey.

During Closing Comments, Ms. Ensor thanked CW&EP for Sparkle in the Park, stating it is beautiful. She also thanked the Parks Department for the cleanup work they did in the park before the lights went up for Sparkle in the Park. Mr. Taylor stated he attended the ribbon cutting for the Kellogg Lake playground and though the weather was not good, the playground looks awesome. He thanked all who braved the weather and attended the ribbon cutting. Ms. Blair thanked CW&EP and the City of Carthage departments for hosting Sparkle in the Park, stating she missed it but her children said it looked beautiful. She mentioned that this day is Giving Tuesday and encourages everyone to donate to their favorite non-profit.
Ms. Heckmaster thanked CW&EP for Sparkle in the Park, stating it looks like a Hallmark movie. She stated she had an opportunity to view the Market Plan prepared by Jen Kirby, and said she did an excellent job. Mr. Snow made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliff, to cancel the December 26 Council meeting due to the Christmas and New Year's holiday. Motion carries. He also mentioned how nice Sparkle in the Park looks and thanked CW&EP for hosting the event. He mentioned that Santa was there and will also be at the Christmas parade Monday, December 4. He said he's looking forward the parade and tree lighting. Mr. Elliff acknowledged City Clerk Miranda Deal's upcoming maternity leave, congratulating her and state Council will miss her. He thanked Julie and Public Works for the leaf pickup, stating it is really appreciated by the citizens. Ms. Cossey stated she was at the switch flipping for Sparkle in the Park, and stated it was breathtaking. She thanked CW&EP for the use of the Community Room, and mentioned City Council Chambers has been extended. She mentioned Carthage Speech and Debate has placed first in the last two debates and congratulated them on the victories. She also encourages citizens to adopt an animal from the Humane Society if they are looking to add a pet to their family.

Ms. Cossey made a motion, seconded by Mr. Snow, to adjourn the regular session of the Council Meeting. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

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Dan Rife, Mayor

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Miranda Deal, City Clerk