

City of Carthage, Missouri

CITY COUNCIL

October 8, 2024 - 6:30 PM
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MINUTES

To hear the full comments and discussions, please refer to the recorded Youtube video of this meeting.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8UQji9mse0>

The Carthage City Council met in regular session on the above date in Council Chambers at 06:30 PM with Mayor Dan Rife presiding. Deputy Fire Chief Jason Martin gave the invocation. Police Chief Bill Hawkins led the flag salute.

The following Council Members answered roll call: Chris Taylor, Derek Peterson, Lori Leece, Terri Heckmaster, Alan Snow, Tom Barlow, Tiffany Cossey, and Jana Schramm. Interim City Administrator Traci Cox and City Attorney Jon Gold were also present.

The following Department Heads were present: Police Chief Bill Hawkins, Deputy Fire Chief Jason Martin, Parks & Recreation Director Abi Almandinger, IT Administrator Michael Keith, and City Clerk Miranda Deal.

Mr. Snow made a motion, seconded by Mr. Peterson, to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2024 Council Meeting. Motion carried.

During Citizen's Participation, Julie Reams, Chamber President, spoke to everyone about the Maple Leaf Festival events that are starting and encouraged everyone to attend the events. She thanked all the departments for all of their help during the festival. She reported there are a record number of craft and food vendors and that parade route spots for floats will be sent out this week. She stated that there are many events, some returning events and some new events and she would love to see everyone out and attending them.

Paula Richardson, 111 W 10th Street, spoke on knowing Bill Scheerer and addressed the comments that he had made a few meetings ago towards Ms. Schramm. She also spoke about the recall. She spoke on the community having real problems that need solutions, like hiring a fire chief and addressing the humane society issues.

Georgeann Dinger, 1321 Hazel, she spoke on her neighbor and backyard breeding issues. She also spoke on the animal control job and looking at making changes to help solve some of the issues in town. She thinks that a committee needs to be formed between the city, humane society, and citizens to help come up with ideas to address the overpopulation of animals in the city. She thanked the council members and department heads that came out to see the situation at her neighbors house and said she had previously spoken with Robin Blair and Dustin Edge about it.

Chuck Bryant, CWEP General Manager, spoke on the history of Carthage and their electricity, and also spoke on it being Public Power Week and listed the events that they have happening

throughout the week to celebrate. He also thanked the workers who volunteered to go to Florida for Hurricane Helene, and then the ones who were currently down in Orlando waiting for Hurricane Milton to hit.

Joel Terry, 2219 Alison, spoke on the recall Cossey signs that he has seen around town and asked what Ms. Cossey had done to be recalled. He also addressed the news media and their reporting of council meetings in Carthage.

Darren Collier, CWEP Board Member, spoke on the comments made by Mayor Rife about the State Auditor finding red flags, and the letters that CWEP sent to the State asking for clarification. The Attorney General had responded saying that they found “no evidence to conclude that any member of this office voiced concerns about or advocated for a bill ordering an audit of CWEP”. He stated that the State Auditor’s office responded and said that they could not produce any additional documentation other than the investigative summary sent to the Mayor in April which states that concerns about the city’s own compliance “would be better reviewed through an audit of the City of Carthage initiated by a petition” when the State Auditors office was called for clarification they replied and said documentation from their office “does not address an concerns of the CWEP and that the State Auditors office does not take further action”. The CWEP Board has yet to hear anything else from the Mayor after they requested further information.

Mayor Rife responded and said that he stands by what was relayed to him and that it is council responsibility to look into any complaints or concerns that are brought up. He still believes an audit needs to be done and if nothing is found, he will be the first to admit that he was wrong. It is the council’s responsibility to make sure that the City funds are being used as they should be.

Mr. Snow reported that the Budget Ways and Means Committee had a special meeting scheduled for earlier in the evening but they did not meet due to lack of quorum. There is a resolution on the agenda for a budget adjustment for more money for Paul Martin. The next budget meeting is scheduled for October 14 at 5:30.

Ms. Cossey reported that the Committee on Insurance, Audit and Claims met on this day and approved the claims. It was reported that there was a record number of attendees. She reported that Ms. Cox announced that there may be a 2% increase for health insurance renewals, she also reported some other insurance issues. City Hall will be upgrading technology to the cloud and will be unable to accept any payments outside of court payments on October 29. The next meeting is scheduled for October 22 at 5:30 pm.

Mr. Heckmaster reported that the Public Safety Committee is between meetings with the next meeting scheduled for October 21 at 5:30.

Ms. Cossey reported the Public Services Committee is between meetings.

Mr. Taylor reported that the Public Works Committee met on October 1. During staff reports it was reported that Public Works is working with the railroad to deal with the bridge issues. Road improvements are going as expected, and the gas company is 6 months ahead of schedule. The next meeting is scheduled for November 5 at 5:30.

Special Committee and Board Liaison reports were given by Ms. Heckmaster for Planning, Zoning, and Historic Preservation, Ms. Leece for Carthage Water and Electric Plant and

mentioned public power week, she also mentioned the Humane Society and the Maple Leaf events that they will be involved with. Mr. Snow also reported that he met with the attorneys for the impeachment hearing and explained what was to be voted on later in the evening with the motion to disqualify and the new impeachment date.

During Remarks from Council Members, Mr. Peterson reported that the Public Works Committee is planning a tour of the bridges at the next meeting and gave credit to the departments and the Chamber for the Maple Leaf events. Ms. Leece thanked Becky Andrews for a tour of the Boots Motel and the Visitor's Center. She also encouraged people to sign up for the chicken pageant. Ms. Heckmaster thanked Jason Martin for the tour of the fire department and said the new fire engine looks great. She also thanked Julie Tilley at Public Works for all of her hard work. Mr. Snow said that last week the Jasper County Commissioners passed a property tax freeze for those over 62. The base year for property taxes is 2024 and you can sign up for the freeze between January and May, you do have to apply every year. Mr. Barlow did tell Georgeann Dinger that he did receive her message about her neighbor and tried to call back but did not get in touch. He also recommends that if you are able to, participate in the customer academy through CW&EP. Ms. Cossey thanked Ms. Reams for all of her hard work for Maple Leaf, thanked CWEP crews for their work and those who have volunteered to help in Florida. She also agrees with Georgeann about forming a committee to address humane society issues. She also addressed the red flags the Mayor brought up with CWEP and asked him to invite Mr. Dally to speak to the council and address the red flag issue. She also asked the Mayor when he planned to have another hiring committee meeting for the City Administrator position. Ms. Schramm reported that she recently met with Zeb Carney over at Public Works and said that he is always looking for ways to save the City money and look for ways to improve what they do. She thanked Wyatt Hettinger for his help in getting the tree on Fairview taken care of, and she also met Keith Wheat who is the longest tenured employee at the Street Department. She thanked Josiah Bayless for his help in resolving a drainage issue behind Becky Andrews building. She also reported on various projects being worked on at Public Works and the Street department. She met with Dan Curry and took a tour of the golf course and also met with Tyler Markham. She took a Boots motel tour as well, and attended the recent Chamber Coffee at the CWEP plant, and also met with Steve McIntosh about the property tax rate freeze.

Deputy Fire Chief Jason Martin reported that the new engine will be in the parade and that they will have a push in ceremony for the truck when it is ready to be put into use. He also reported that he has two lieutenants going to Jefferson City for investigator classes. He also said that he stopped in front of Bill Lasley's building when he saw a car parked in front of a fire hydrant and asked them to call anytime someone parked there and it happened repeatedly. He spoke with Mr. Carney and Mr. Bayless at Public Works and they were able to do some loading zone painting and that seems to have resolved the issue. He also mentioned the annual pancake feed at the Fire Department, they will be starting at 5:30 and ending at 9 this year.

Interim City Administrator Traci Cox reported that the health insurance renewal rates were estimated to increase 2%, there is the issue with Mercy and Anthem right now and so the City is going to stay on top of that to make sure employees remain covered when they do go to Mercy. The insurance company has reimbursed around \$115,000 for the first storm that came through, the second storm payments have not been resolved yet. She reported on attending an MPR conference where she met with one of their attorneys and their CEO. Mike Sindel is the CEO of MPR and he informed her that the drama that has been going on is creating a potential for additional lawsuits and they are considering increasing our deductible, she does

have another meeting scheduled to discuss further. She reported on the health fair numbers and commended the Wellness Committee for all of their hard work for coming up with new ideas to increase attendance. She also reported that City Hall will be doing their financial software upgrades at the end of the month and they will be unable to any payments outside of court payments. She also thanked Morgan Housh at the Fire Department for helping apply for another EMPG Grant for 5 new radios, she is very helpful and knowledgeable in applying for these grants. They will be doing Tourism Director interviews later this week, these are happening to allow the City to explore the options available to help determine the best way to serve the community. She also reminded everyone to shop local and skip Amazon.

The Committee on Claims filed a report in the amount of \$813,813.42 against the following funds: General Revenue \$126,341.41, Public Health \$681.31, Lodging \$21,627.28, Parks/Stormwater \$58,225.05, Fire Protection \$30,304.71, Golf \$4,522.13, Capital Improvements \$7,336.19, Myers Park \$4,555.50, Use Tax \$52,444.82, Public Facilities \$15,313.81, Public Library \$25,000.00, and Payroll \$467,461.21. Ms. Cossey made a motion, seconded by Mr. Peterson, to accept the report and allow the claims. Motion carried.

Under Old Business, C.B. 24-50 – An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract with DPI Printing & Signs for the installation of a new electronic messaging board at Memorial Hall in the amount of \$32,256.00, in the City of Carthage Missouri was placed was placed on second reading followed by a roll call vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Ayes: Taylor, Peterson, Leece, Heckmaster, Snow, Barlow, Cossey, and Schramm. The Council Bill was approved and numbered Ordinance 24-50.

Under New Business, C.B. 24-51 – An Ordinance accepting the final plat of the Urban Licing Subdivision generally located South of Wendy Lane and West River Street, in the City of Carthage, Missouri, as requested by Building Carthage LLC was placed on first reading with no action taken.

Consider and discuss a hearing date for the motion to disqualify. Mr. Snow reviewed the motions that were heard during a meeting with the lawyers involved with the impeachment. He did not want to rule on the motion to disqualify without hearing from the entire council. The motion to disqualify would disqualify himself, Ms. Schramm, and Ms. Cossey. The council needed to decide on how to have the meeting and decide on a date and time. The attorneys had agreed to October 15 at 4pm if the rest of the council was available. Mr. Snow said there were three options to have the hearing, all by Zoom, all in person with attorneys traveling down from St. Louis, or the council in person with the attorneys on Zoom. There were questions about whether or not the motion to disqualify and the impeachment could be held on the 15th. Mr. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Ms. Leece to hold the motion to disqualify hearing on October 15 at 3 pm via zoom. Ms. Cossey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Schramm, to table Mr. Taylor's motion until after the closed session so that a response could be received from Paul Martin on whether or not the impeachment could be held on the same day or not. Motion carried.

Consider and discuss a new date for the impeachment hearing of Mayor Rife. Mr. Snow made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cossey to amend the agenda to move this item after the closed session after the previous motion. Motion carried.

Consider and discuss adoption of Second Revised Articles of Impeachment. Ms. Cossey made a motion, seconded by Mr. Peterson, to adopt the Second Revised Articles as presented.

Motion carried with 6 yeas and 2 nays. Ayes: Peterson, Heckmaster, Snow, Barlow, Cossey, and Schramm. Nays: Taylor, Leece.

Consider and discuss a date for a council work session. Ms. Cossey discussed having a joint meeting with the CWEP Board and City Council, some of the dates given by CWEP were October 15-17. The 17th is the CWEP Board meeting and October 15-16 may need to be saved for the impeachment if it can happen on the 15th, and possibly carried over into the 16th. Ms. Cossey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Heckmaster, to amend the agenda to move this item until after the closed session following items 2 and 3. Motion carried.

Ms. Heckmaster made a motion, seconded by Ms. Schramm, to table all Mayor's Appointments until November 12. Motion carried with 5 yeas and 3 nays. Ayes: Peterson, Heckmaster, Barlow, Cossey, and Schramm. Nays: Taylor, Leece, Snow.

Before Resolution 2056 was voted on, Mayor Rife stated that this was supposed to go to the special budget meeting prior to the council meeting earlier in the evening but there was a lack of quorum so there was no meeting. To keep his word and not delay the impeachment process, Mayor Rife said he was fine presenting this to council without a committee approval beforehand. It is not protocol, but he will allow it this time.

Mr. Snow made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cossey, to approve Resolution 2056 -- A Resolution authorizing a supplemental budget adjustment to the General Revenue Fund for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Resolution 2056 was adopted after a roll call vote of 6 yeas and 2 nays. Ayes: Peterson, Heckmaster, Snow, Barlow, Cossey and Schramm. Nays: Taylor, Leece.

During closing comments, Mr. Snow said he looks forward to enjoying Maple Leaf and fall sports at the high school. Ms. Schramm said that she went out to visit the Humane Society and she donated her last two City Council checks to them and challenged others to do the same. She also spoke on the October campaign that the Soroptimist Club is doing, she asked for donations of new or gently used bras to be donated to go to women in need. She also thanked the CWEP workers for volunteering to help after the hurricanes in Florida. Ms. Leece thanked Jason Martin for a tour of the fire department. Ms. Heckmaster prayed for those workers from CWEP helping in the hurricane relief and also prayed for those in Florida.

Ms. Heckmaster made a motion, seconded by Mr. Snow, to close the meeting according to section 610.021 (3), the agenda includes the possibility of a vote to close part of the meeting to discuss hiring, firing, disciplining or promoting of particular employees by a public governmental body when personal information about the employee is discussed or recorded followed by a roll call vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Ayes: Chris Taylor, Derek Peterson, Lori Leece, Terri Heckmaster, Alan Snow, Tom Barlow, Tiffany Cossey, and Jana Schramm. Motion carried at 8:05 p.m.

There was a short recess before the closed session started. Council went into closed session at 8:15 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Mr. Barlow, to return to the regular session of the Council Meeting at 9:50 p.m. followed by a roll call vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Ayes: Chris Taylor, Derek Peterson, Lori Leece, Terri Heckmaster, Alan Snow, Tom Barlow, Tiffany

Cossey, and Jana Schramm. Motion carried.

Consider and discuss a hearing date for the motion to disqualify. Ms. Cossey said that Paul Martin and Tim Engelmeyer said they don't see any issue having the impeachment on the same day as the motion to disqualify. Mr. Taylor's motion of having the motion to disqualify hearing on October 15 at 3 pm via Zoom failed by a vote of 1 yea and 7 nays. Ayes: Taylor
Nays: Peterson, Leece, Heckmaster, Snow, Barlow, Cossey and Schramm.

Ms. Cossey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Heckmaster to have the motion to disqualify hearing and the impeachment hearing on Tuesday October 15 at 3 pm at Carthage Water and Electric Community Room, if the community room is unavailable then the location would be City Hall Council Chambers. Motion carried with 7 yeas and 1 nay. Ayes: Peterson, Leece, Heckmaster, Snow, Barlow, Cossey, and Schramm. Nays: Taylor.

Consider and discuss a date for a council work session. Ms. Cossey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Schramm, to table this item until the next council meeting on October 22. Motion carried.

Mr. Snow made a motion, seconded by Mr. Taylor, to adjourn the regular session of the Council Meeting. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF CARTHAGE, MISSOURI
October 8, 2024

The Carthage City Council met in closed session on the above date in City Hall Council Chambers at 6:30 p.m. with Mayor Dan Rife presiding.

Ms. Heckmaster made a motion, seconded by Mr. Snow, to close the meeting according to section 610.021 (3), the agenda includes the possibility of a vote to close part of the meeting to discuss hiring, firing, disciplining or promoting of particular employees by a public governmental body when personal information about the employee is discussed or recorded followed by a roll call vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Ayes: Chris Taylor, Derek Peterson, Lori Leece, Terri Heckmaster, Alan Snow, Tom Barlow, Tiffany Cossey, and Jana Schramm. Motion carried at 8:05 p.m.

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The following Council Members answered roll call Chris Taylor, Derek Peterson, Lori Leece, Terri Heckmaster, Alan Snow, Tom Barlow, Tiffany Cossey, and Jana Schramm.

City Attorney Jon Gold, Interim City Administrator Traci Cox, and City Clerk Miranda Deal were also present.

The council discussed a personnel issue. No action was taken.

Mr. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Mr. Barlow, to return to the regular session of the Council Meeting at 9:50 p.m. followed by a roll call vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Ayes: Chris Taylor, Derek Peterson, Lori Leece, Terri Heckmaster, Alan Snow, Tom Barlow, Tiffany Cossey, and Jana Schramm. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Miranda Deal
City Clerk