



Minutes of the General Government and Public Safety Committee meeting of October 10, 2011.

The meeting was called to order by Alderman Bormann at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Grenke, Aldermen Orsini, Simmons, Wilkins, and Sanders. Also attending were Lynn Behrns, Police Sergeant Bob Bias, Darryl Spauldin, Evelyn Robertson, Steven Oberman, and James Smith.

Those present participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Comments from Citizens

Robertson, who lives at 221 Sunset, commented on matters involving the Neighborhood Watch program, which has become more or less moribund. She would like the City to take measures to re-energize it to help citizens such as Tim Zimmerman. She thought the City should still have a large supply of handout booklets and similar materials. Wilkins asked why the Watch had died out. Robertson suggested that some activists had died or moved. Perhaps there was not a level of problems sufficient to keep them charged up. Perhaps the Police Department was less enthusiastic. Committee members said that they would follow up on this.

Economic Development

Ginny Zoellers was not present, but had submitted a written report on recent Chamber of Commerce and economic development activities.

The Chamber's barbeque event seems to have been well attended and successful. Good weather helped.

Behrns has prepared an ordinance that will be the first step in creating an Enhanced Enterprise Zone. The ordinance is mostly a statement of support and acts to create a new commission to review the required application to the State Department of Economic Development and then individual proposals. If the ordinance is adopted, the Mayor will have to appoint five directors, the school district will appoint one, and a last director will be selected by the remaining governmental entities levying property taxes in the zone. There is a map appended as an exhibit to the ordinance, showing that a large part of the zone will be in the unincorporated county. When paper work is done in a few months, both the City and County will each have to pass another ordinance to complete the task.

Park Department

Minutes of the previous meeting of the Park Board have been distributed. The next meeting of the Board will be on October 18.

Cemetery Advisory Committee

There was no prepared report.

Tree Board

No report. Orsini asked that the Board furnish an updated report next month.

Library Board

No formal report was made, but minutes and a future agenda were presented in the Committee packet.

Finance



Financial statements for September were made available, although Behrns said that a portion of the Ameren property tax payment had been mis-posted, and about \$1,800 would be moved from the General Fund to the Library Debt Service Fund. Sales tax receipts continue to be higher than expectations. Gross receipts taxes and State gas tax receipts averaged close to projections.

Bills over \$1,250

Committee received a preliminary list of bills over \$1,250. Committee members had no immediate questions.

Other General Government

Behrns noted that Kathy Colvin and Heather Lockett had been reviewing proposals for new financial accounting software. There are many problems with the current software and the prospect of future support is nebulous. The office staff have attended several product demonstrations and are consulting with other cities and with the City's auditor. Staff expects to narrow the potential vendors to two or three and then consult with the Technical Advisory Committee. Behrns suggested, since Alderman Wilkins had recently been responsible for choosing such software for his day job, that the Mayor should appoint him as an addition to the Advisory Committee .

Fire Department

In the absence of Fire Chief Rusch, Behrns presented a report of Fire Department activities in September. There seem to be no particularly noteworthy events and the number of EMS calls was significantly diminished from August. Rusch has not identified any potential replacement fire truck.

Emergency Management

There was no formal report.

City Prosecutor

No report.

Police Department

Bias presented the report of Police Department activities in September. He advised the Committee that Centralia had been approved for a 50% match grant of \$2,430 toward the purchase of nine protective vests. These vests should be replaced about every five years. The department has aging vests for current officers and some even older vests for reserves and part-timers (although these officers tend to use vests from their full-time jobs.) The oldest could be recycled to poorer departments, but there might be liability. Bias said that the department will review grant conditions and determine whether Centralia needs to buy them soon, or could budget for them to be acquired in April of the new fiscal year.

Behrns reported of a letter from MOPERM to Chief Dudgeon which acknowledges the Police Department's on-line training program and gives a \$400.00 credit against Police Liability Insurance premiums. This achievement has come to the Department for several years now.

Protective Inspection

Behrns reported that city Attorney Beck had recently made large strides in the matter of the Amaranth Missionary Baptist Church building. He has secured all the necessary signatures and a check to the State of Missouri as necessary to reinstate the defunct corporation which held title to the land. If matters proceed by plan, the corporation can then transfer title to an active church from Columbia,



which can then offer it for sale to either of the adjacent businesses or some other purchaser. That new owner could then be responsible for demolition of the dilapidated building.

Spauldin questioned the wisdom of potentially allowing a private party to salvage materials from the 105 N. Allen site. Behrns said that he will have understandings with any such party about liability issues.

Behrns repeated the brief report he made concerning billing for properties where the City had to mow high grass and weeds. Spauldin again intimated that the City did not treat property owners equally.

As May Arise

Bormann asked that staff find work product from a year or so ago, that would allow for fewer restrictions on political and municipal involvement by firefighters and other mostly-volunteer "employees". He would like to bring up the issue again.

Bormann noted materials from the Missouri Municipal League describing on-line training for city officials. Behrns will send out pdfs of these, and the City will pay for any sessions desired.

Simmons was concerned about present fire conditions. Behrns described the City's restrictions on burning in the city limits, but also said that the Fire Chief can impose a total ban. Unless there is rain in the next day or so, Behrns will consult with Rusch about the need for such a ban.

The Committee then adjourned at about 7:55 p.m.