

Minutes of the General Government and Public Safety Committee meeting of November 14, 2011.

The meeting was called to order by Alderman Bormann at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Grenke, Aldermen Orsini, Simmons, Wilkins, Sanders, and Angell. Also attending were Lynn Behrns, Police Sergeant Bob Bias, Fire Chief Denny Rusch, Darryl Spauldin, Ken Coolley, James Smith, and several boy scouts and their parents.

Those present participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Comments from Citizens

Coolley asked the Aldermen to consider removing the two stop signs on Jefferson Street at its intersection with Sims St. He said that school buses no longer travel this route and traffic on Sims is minimal. Bias suggested that the sign helped to discourage speeding. Coolley said that the four-way stop at Lakeview was close enough to serve that purpose. Angell thought there were generally too many stop signs in town; removing a few might be a good idea. However, he noted that many students still seemed to use the crossing at this intersection. Committee members thought that signs at Early or Booth might be more effective for speed control. Committee directed Behrns to find the means to count the volume of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. They agreed to consider the matter again in the future.

Emergency Management

There was no formal report. Mayor Grenke noted that Wednesday would be National Winter Awareness Day.

City Prosecutor

No report.

Police Department

Bias presented the report of Police Department activities in October. He said that the total number of traffic stops was not the same as a count of traffic tickets. He acknowledged that the department had received a large number of animal complaints in the last month.

Bias read from a Certificate of Recognition from the Sunnydale Academy which had been presented to the Police Department on this day. It was accompanied by a donation of \$75.00

Noting that Chief Dudgeon had previously described a problem with the deterioration of several police cars, Bias reported that Dudgeon had identified used patrol cars which could be obtained from the Highway Patrol. Centralia could purchase a 2005 Chevrolet Impala with 65,000 miles for \$6,000. A 2007 Impala with 55,000 miles could be purchased for \$10,450. Additionally, a light bar could be bought at half price (\$1,600). Behrns said that he believes that spending \$18,050 now was achievable, if the police then bought no vehicle next year. Bias said that only one of the department's current cars would be sold off—the car formerly used by Sgt. Cooper. Angell questioned how many cars were really needed by the department, since this brought the inventory up to seven patrol cars and one animal control vehicle. Bias said this balanced the six full-time officers, five part-time officers, and let the Chief stop having to use his personal car. After some discussion, Orsini moved to purchase both of the cars described, plus the light bar. Simmons seconded the motion. On roll call vote, all members voted in favor except Angell, who voted no. The motion carried.

Fire Department

Rusch presented a report of Fire Department activities in October. Committee briefly discussed how to limit alarm calls to the Hubbell/Chance Factory resulting from water pressure drops.

Protective Inspection

Behrns said he had talked to the owner of the house at 212 South Barr. The owner had been in the process of remodeling the house, but finally determined that there were too many problems to make it financially viable. The owner now plans to finish paying for the property and then demolish the house. There is no set date for this to happen, and the house does not meet any of the criteria for being a “dangerous structure”.

A building permit for another single family house in Mystic Ridge was issued today. This is the 23rd new housing unit permitted this year.

Orsini noted that the cupola or upper elevator room on the roof of the Narragansett building was no longer present. It is unknown if it fell in or was removed.

Behrns reported no new progress on demolition of 105 North Allen. Committee engaged in an extended discussion of the application of OSHA rules and protective barriers at the work site.

Economic Development

Ginny Zoellers was not present, but had submitted a written report on recent Chamber of Commerce and economic development activities. Smith had questions about changes in schedule for Christmas events.

Park Department

Minutes of the previous meeting of the Park Board have been distributed. The next meeting of the Board will be on November 15.

Cemetery Advisory Committee

There was no report.

Tree Board

No report. Behrns said that he would be supplying budget information to John Kottwitz so that the Board can prepare an application for recognition as a Tree City USA. Kottwitz will be in attendance or send a written report for the December committee meeting.

Library Board

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

Finance

Financial statements for October were made available

Bills over \$1,250

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

Other General Government

Behrns presented the first draft of an ordinance that would allow more latitude for firefighters and other part time employees to participate more fully in local government and to clear up problems concerning of possible double appointments for City Clerk, City Collector, and City Clerk.

Behrns recommended a new attempt to make the City Collector an appointed position. The issue had been placed on the ballot three times in the past and failed in each time. Committee members felt that the job had changed and had relatively few duties. The change in status would not threaten the incumbent –Kathy Colvin. If the City does a good job of explaining this, perhaps the issue will be approved this time. The Board will first need to pass an ordinance to put on the question on the April ballot. This should not add expense, since the City aldermen are elected at the same time.

As May Arise

Following up on the discussion of the Public Works and Public Utilities Committee, Behrns has analyzed the fiscal impact of the increase in tipping fees at the Columbia landfill. Making conservative projections for tonnage, inflation, etc., Behrns calculated the amount of revenues necessary to break even between now and fiscal year 2014-15 when the main trash truck would be replaced. To achieve approximate balance, Behrns estimates that the City should charge at least another \$1.90 per month per residential customer, with similar increases for commercial customers. Behrns has prepared an ordinance which could be passed in November and take effect for the bill that go out about December 1. (Trash bills are paid in advance, unlike the charges for water, sewer, and electricity.

Behrns distributed emails concerning changes in the Safe Routes to School sidewalk project concerning ADA problems. MoDOT has reviewed the plans prepared by Allstate for modifications to about 30 feet on the north side of Bruton Street. Troy Balthazor of Great Plains made comments on the plans and listed concerns. The MoDOT engineers responded to the comments and do not see the need for any additional corrections. Balthazor responded with points of disagreement. After review of the exchange, Committee comments were to the effect that the contractor should proceed with the proposed correction so that the project may be closed out. Behrns will convey that feeling to Allstate and the contractor.

The Committee then adjourned at about 8:20 p.m.