

Minutes of the General Government and Public Safety Committee meeting of Tuesday, January 15, 2013.

The meeting was called to order by Alderman Wilkins at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Grenke, and Aldermen Magley, Sanders, Simmons, and Bormann. Also attending were Lynn Behrns, Police Chief Larry Dudgeon, Fire Chief Denny Rusch, Art Dollens, James Smith, several members of the CREDI Board, Jess Lingle, Ron Bellamy, Nicole Hudson, Darren Ford, members of the Centralia School District Board, Evelyn Robertson, Linda Bormann, and others.

Those present participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chief Dudgeon present plaques and certificates to Bellamy and Hudson in recognition of their actions in a medical emergency at the Hubbell plant. Centralia dispatch received a call stating that an employee was on the floor and unconscious. Hudson was able to contact Officer Bellamy and direct him to the site within two minutes. Bellamy rendered aid until emergency medical personnel arrived. The victim, Thomas G. Ludwig, was then transported to the hospital. Although he latter died, he was at least temporarily saved by the police and first responders. Dudgeon made the presentation in the presence of family members and coworkers, who thanked both the officer and dispatcher.

Comments from Citizens

Art Dollens of 430 S. Rollins questioned City procedures for passing documents from the City Clerk to the City Prosecutor. He was told that he had to go through the police department and this was contrary to a letter from the Missouri Attorney General. Wilkins said he would reach out to April Wilson and get a response for Dollens. Dollens referenced a bomb threat in past years and contacts with the federal government. Dollens also asked if a letter from the school district which forbids him from coming within five hundred feet of school facilities would be sufficient to bar him from going to the weight room at the Recreation Center. Committee members acknowledge that this was not an *ex parte* situation. Dudgeon asked Dollens if this had ever been a problem. Dollens said not in the past. Dudgeon said that it should not be and issue now. Dollens asked that the City carefully consider participating in an SRO program—the SRO should be available as a resource and not as a law enforcement officer.

Economic Development

CREDI members have submitted a draft contract for services. The contract would enable the City to help fund CREDI activities. Wilkins suggested that the contract differed from the presentation made at the last meeting by Barry Stevens. It seemed to be more expansive than the job creation orientation previously described. Jeff Grimes explained that the other tasks would be directly related to job creation. He told Simmons that CREDI's support of community activities would not duplicate activities of the Chamber of Commerce, but would focus on events such as the Job Fair and the human resources seminars, related to business support and attraction. They did not desire to overlap Chamber tasks.

Grimes also introduced Jess Lingle, who is a student at MU and would be an intern for the spring semester. At first, he will have a space at the City Hall offices. Part of his job will be to research economic development grants, using the eCIVIS program.

Park Department

The Park Board agenda for their January meeting was in the Committee agenda packet.

Cemetery Advisory Committee

No report.

Tree Board

No report.

Library Board

No formal report was made, but an agenda for the next meeting was presented in the Committee packet.

Finance

Financial statements for December were in the agenda packet. Behrns had nothing unusual to highlight, but did note that sales and property taxes should exceed budget targets.

Bills over \$1,250

Committee received a preliminary list of bills over \$1,250. Simmons asked about the bill from Nu-Life Laboratories. Behrns said that was where the City bought calcium chloride, which is mixed with sand and salt to help with icy streets.

City Prosecutor

No report. Mayor Grenke suggested that it was time again for a visit of April Wilson to a Committee meeting.

Alderman Angell arrived at 7:35.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Rusch presented a report of December activities of the Fire Department. Rusch said that the new truck was ready to go, except for the radio and door decals. He noted that he intends to renumber the fire trucks in the order of their likely use. This may complicate how the front office tracks the history of repairs and maintenance, but Behrns said he would get it worked out.

Emergency Management

No report.

Protective Inspection

Behrns reported progress on some designated dangerous structures. Linda Yager's house on South Allen Street has a demolition permit and some work has started. Newton Davis, Jr. is negotiating sale of his business on North Allen to the adjacent owner, who would then demolish or refurbish parts of the structure. Russ Greene has talked to Behrns about the procedures for securing an architect and remodeling the building on Railroad Street which formerly belonged to Bill Meador. The first residential construction permit for 2013 has already been issued.

Behrns noted that the agenda packet had contained the draft of an ordinance which would increase the fees for building permits to the same level as those now charged by Boone County. Any less and the City will be subsidizing the cost of a permit, since the County is already using the rates. Committee members concurred that the City should followed suit. Committee members also discussed whether to maintain the categories of permit applicants which would be exempt from fees. These include other governments, churches, gas and electric inspections, and some types of remodeling. Most members thought that the exemptions should end, but Sanders argued that those entities provided public

services. Simmons said that this was a good time to change because no projects were in the pipeline that would be affected. Magley agreed. Behrns said that the ordinance will be put on the regular Board agenda with no exempt applicants. If aldermen reconsidered, that version could be amended.

Mayor Grenke said he would report on the de la Rosa hearing and dangerous structure findings at the next meeting.

Police Department

Dudgeon presented the report of December activities and calls for the Police Department. The Committee had no questions.

Wilkins read a portion of State statutes concerning expulsion of persons from school meetings and property. The authority is general and broad, but matches the interpretation used by the Police Department is using. Wilkins said he did not feel our department would be violating any laws by obeying the requests of the school board.

Budget Considerations

Behrns passed out and reviewed a draft of the General Fund budget. The draft includes the estimated net cost for one half of a new School Resources Officer position (\$21,000). He said that he can add it and probably still achieve a balanced budget. The same would hold for the CREDI contract. If there is some adverse occurrence before the end of the fiscal year, the aldermen should advise him on what to cut. He noted that adding the two costs impacts all future years and is compounded. Projected budgets for more distant years are already very tight, since revenues do not increase as fast as expenses, even just those from basic inflation. The draft General Fund budget has few capital or special items: a pickup truck, service agreement on the police recording system, purchase of a used, four-wheel drive pickup from the Highway Patrol, and a small part of repair work need on the stormsewer under the Chance parking lot. It includes demolitions incentives, the CREDI contract, and the SRO contract. At the moment it has almost a \$10,000 deficit.

There was an extended discussion with school board members about providing an SRO. Behrns distributed copies of past contracts between the school district and City. The first was from the 2002 federal grant. The other was used when the district took over the SRO program. City staff will research how similar positions are funded in other districts. Sanders suggested that the Sheriff's department could supply a deputy as an alternative—it presently does for some other small departments. Wilkins said that local police officers would have greater familiarity with our community. The timing of implementation was important; Ford wanted to start quickly. Behrns said that the cost impact to the City if the program started in February or March of this year was minor. The new budget would address the regular annual costs. Dudgeon agreed that any future federal grant programs would not be immediately helpful. Behrns estimates a total annual cost of \$42,000, if Patrol Officer Brooks is designated to the position. (Her employee benefit expenses are lower than most other officers.) Dudgeon strongly supported adding the SRO, because he fears national trends of school violence will continue. There was another shooting incident just this afternoon. Audience members suggested that adding one officer creates a safer environment, but there is no way to guarantee absolute safety. The SRO would have to cover four schools. The contract would allow for the SRO to be supplemented by other officers when Brooks was not available and also would expect that she would respond to outside police calls if necessary. Dudgeon said he might be able to fill the staffing gap on the department schedule with greater use of reserves, but Behrns' budget assumes replacement through the addition of a new full time position. Committee determined that, between now

and the next committee meeting, Dudgeon and Ford will work on a new contract, which Behrns and City Attorney Beck can review. Rush asked if the school district could fund more of the position, say 75%. Others suggested 100%. Dudgeon said that SRO might relieve some of the police department's case load to the extent it represents crimes by or against students. City and school officials agreed that the goal was to have an armed officer available for at least 40 hours per week. The SRO's training and vacations would be handled during summers.

Closed Session

Simmons then moved that the Committee elect to go into closed session and hold a closed vote, and the purpose of such closed session and closed vote shall be preparation, including any discussions or work product, on behalf of the City of Centralia or its representatives for negotiation with an employee group, as provided for under Section 610.021 (9) of the Revised Statutes of Missouri. Magley seconded the motion. On roll call vote all members present voted in favor and the motion carried.

The Committee then met in closed session to discuss proposals from the employee union. No votes were taken until Simmons moved to return to open session. Magley seconded the motion. On roll call vote all members present voted in favor and the motion carried.

Return to Regular Session

Simmons moved that the Committee adjourn. Bormann seconded the motion, and all members voted in favor. The Committee then adjourned at about 9:30 p.m.