

Minutes of the General Government and Public Safety Committee meeting of Monday, March 11, 2013.

The meeting was called to order by Alderman Wilkins at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Grenke, and Aldermen Magley, Simmons, and Bormann. Also attending were Lynn Behrns, Police Chief Larry Dudgeon, Fire Chief Denny Rusch, Lorry Myers, Barry Stevens, James Lee, Nancy Baca and her husband, James Smith and others.

Those present participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Comments from Citizens

There were no comments.

Economic Development

Behrns said he still is anticipating the City's first request for a project under the EEZ program. The state Department of Economic Development is assisting a local business with the application forms.

US Cellular is leaving its location in Kinkead's Pharmacy before the end of June. The company is closing several locations in small markets. The Radio Shack operation will continue.

Behrns has been assisting a local citizen with possible construction of a new recreation-related facility and business.

Prompted by Behrns, Rusch told the Committee that LaCrosse Lumber has purchased the old Dairy Queen site and some adjacent property. They intend to relocate the business from downtown to a new facility on Highway22. The old site will become available for other business.

Alderman Angell arrived.

Members of the CREDI board were present and distributed copies of a report for their activities. A committee member suggested that a CREDI report become a regular agenda item, just as Chamber reports come monthly. CREDI and the Chamber have produced an insert for the Purchase with a Purpose program. It will be sent out to utility customers with the City newsletter. Another flier on the Job and Business Expo will be on bulletin board and front counter of office.

CREDI board members met with School District and Hubbell to help eliminate delays in adding a welding program through school facilities.

Park Department

The Park Board minutes for meetings in February and March were 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.

Baca mentioned that the Library will be holding a Teen Tech night later in the week.

Finance

Financial statements for February were in the agenda packet. They contained no surprises and affirm the estimates for actual revenues and expenditures contained in the draft budget for Fiscal Year 20113-14. Only the Business Surtax distribution remains to be sent from the County Collector. There is no way to estimate it in advance, so last year's amount is used as a target.

Bills over \$1,250

Committee received a preliminary list of bills over \$1,250. Magley questioned the bill for installation of radios in the fire trucks. He thought the work would be done by the electric crew. Behrns said that both the radio vender and the electric department had done various parts of the job. He will have Mark Mustain do a summary and pass it on at the regular board meeting.

City Prosecutor

No report.

Police Department

Dudgeon presented a report of February activities and calls to the Police Department. He told the committee that he is still trending quite a bit higher for incident reports than last year.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Rusch presented a report of February activities of the Fire Department.

Wilkins thanked the department for its quick response to a medical call involving his family.

Rusch briefly discussed recently completed mechanical repairs to two of the fire trucks.

Mayor Grenke said he was very impressed with the quality of repairs and renovations to the main Fire Station.

Emergency Management

Wilkins presented a proposal to enable the police dispatchers to contact en masse the cell phones of Centralia residents and advise them of emergencies, utility outages, and urgent major announcements.

He has written a program that would send text messages to everyone listed in a data base of cell phone numbers. The major expense would be soliciting the numbers from citizens and setting up the data base. Angell wondered if the data entry could be done by the customers and if the information could be checked on a periodic basis to eliminate "dead" numbers. This would have to be explored; we would not want direct customer access a chance create mischief. Wilkins has prepared a dummy sign-up form. Behrns suggested that a physical address for the customers be given. This would perhaps enable the phone numbers to be attached to a GIS layer, just like the Assessor's address layer. Someday, a dispatcher with a touch screen might be able to send a message to everyone in a marked area on a map. Some expensive GIS operations can already do this. Wilkins said that a second phase of the work would involve adding equipment to translate the text message to a computer voice-giving the same information to handicapped persons and those with land lines. The Committee and Chief Dudgeon were supportive. Behrns will talk about the program with the Midland representatives, and will arrange a meeting for Wilkins and Emergency Management Director Scott

Olsen to make sure that the database could also be usable with the county 911 system, if funded by the new sales tax. Olsen may also know if Reverse 911 or any similar system has encountered any problems we need to be aware of

At this point, a large number of Cub Scouts arrived with their parents and pack leaders. They were here to view local government in action. They were introduced by Robbie Ditto from Pack 90. Chief Dudgeon and Committee members all introduced themselves to the scouts and described their jobs.

Protective Inspection

Because of inclement weather, little work has been done in demolition of nuisance buildings.

Behrns announced that applications for permits for three new single family houses had been submitted this afternoon, making six units for the year-to-date.

Budget considerations.

Behrns asked for questions about the full draft budget. He told Wilkins that the hiring of a part-time officer to fill a full-time slot was a measure to re-staff the department because of the use of Officer Brooks as a School Resource Officer. The projected payroll expense for the department should remain essentially the same, except for the SRO; and the SRO costs are mostly offset by salary supports from the school district.

Behrns told Angell that payroll hours charged for linemen to the Economic Development activity are for setting of power outlets during the Anchor Festival.

As May Arise

The Committee briefly discussed the schedule for the remaining meetings before the election. The Board normally holds a brief meeting before the end of March to pay large last-minute bills. Because of likely absences, the Board thought it would be wise to recess the regular Board meeting of the 18th to an additional meeting on March 25. This would be at 7 p.m. and provide an opportunity to pass important ordinances dealing with contracts for services with CREDI and the Chamber of Commerce and the construction contract for Switzler Street. The budget hearings can still take place and the budget can be adopted by resolution at the regular meeting.

Committee members discussed the presentation from Presiding Commission Atwill and County Sheriff Carey at the committee meeting on March 4. The need for new resources for the Joint Dispatch operations seemed clear to the Centralia Board. Simmons moved that the Board of Aldermen publically endorse the passage of a 3/8 cent sales tax for use for 911 and Emergency Management operations. Bormann seconded the motion. On roll call vote, all voted in favor. No one voted against or abstained. The motion carried.

Bormann said that Atwill will be at the candidate forum next Tuesday to debate an opponent of the tax.

The Committee then adjourned at about 8:03 p.m.