

Minutes of the meeting of the General Government and Public Safety Committee of Monday, September 8, 2014.

The meeting was called to order by Alderman Wilkins at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Grenke, Aldermen Magley, Ward, Vollrath, Bormann, and Lee; also attending were Matt Harline, Gabe Martinez, Connie Kelly, Carol Sharp, Bev Moffat and James Smith. Police Chief Dudgeon arrived at 7:10 p.m.

Those present participated in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS:

Connie Kelly 869 Doty. She spoke about the colony of feral cats she cares for - Trap, Neuter and Release. She does not want cats killed because they do not live in doors. The colony of eight is healthy and not a threat to humans. She spoke against shooting cats and alleged some in her colony had been shot. She gave stats about rabies cases in Missouri, many dozens from bats, 3 cases from cats in the last year, and 3 dogs. She spoke about the meeting that she attended with Ms. Sharp. Kelly reported that Sharp admitted that she had not actually witnessed any cat damaging her trees. Ms. Kelly noted that the Columbia cat advocacy group Spay, Neuter and Protect (SNAP) provided a motion activated audio deterrent device for Ms. Sharp. She stated she gave other suggestions to deter feral cats from coming into her yard. Ms. Kelly suggested that the problem of feral cats, which goes beyond her neighborhood could be alleviated by TNR as she has said before. She has personally spayed or neutered many cats in addition to the ones her colony and aided with adoption at her own cost.

The cats were found at the site, she did not put them there. She spoke about the benefits of cats. The cats preceded the construction of Mystic Ridge and she hopes they will be allowed to live there peacefully.

John Bowers 816 Tidball. He said the cats were a nuisance. Bowers stated they had snuck under the tarp and torn up the carpeting on his boat. He asked why Ms. Kelly walked two blocks away to feed the cats. He said these cats should be licensed or got rid of. He doesn't have cats or dogs but gets cat and dog feces in his yard.

Cinda White 869 Doty. made comments to Mr. Bowers.

Bill Bridgeman 403 Bradford. Mr. Bridgeman is Ms. Kelly's brother in law. He has seen dog feces in his yard and dogs barking. There are wild dogs in his neighborhood that have killed a pet dog. He has helped Ms. Kelly and has a feral cat in his house. Once humans were wild and left there feces where they went. He thinks the whole issue is a waste of taxpayer's time.

Bowers reiterated that he wanted the cats to go.

Carol Sharp, 915 Mystic Drive. She first said that she admired what Ms. Kelly was doing, but the City has ordinances and they limit people to four cats. Connie has eight cats. A neighbor had a cat get into his garage and hissed at his five year-old daughter. She asked the Committee to enforce the ordinances on the books. Ms. Sharp said that it was good to feed cats and spay/neuter them. Ms. Sharp said it was not proven that the cats did the damage to her trees, but it was not proven they didn't. It is know that it is a favorite place for the cats to go. She has three enough to know them well. Ms. Sharp has a dog that is licensed, it has had its shots and it is kept in hard by an electronic collar. She cleans up her dog's feces as required in the City Code. Ms. Sharp said her reading of the Code says if an animal cannot be safely taken up, it can be euthanized. Why do cats get to run wild and her dog doesn't? Ms. Sharp said for the

third time that the City should enforce the existing laws. The trapping and releasing isn't working. It is time to take the next step.

Jeff Grimes 304 E. Barnes. Mr. Grimes stated that Ms. Kelly is doing what the Council encouraged her to do in 2010. Other things may have changed, but Ms. Connie is doing the same thing.

Bormann replied that the Board agreed not to enforce the Code unless the cats became a nuisance.

Crystal Bridgeman 403 Bradford. She asked the Committee how many complaints they had received. Magley reported that he had heard several. Ms. Bridgeman said she thought it was complaint driven. Bormann replied it didn't matter how many complaints, the point was there were complaints and the City is enforcing the ordinance now.

Mr. Bormann asked if Ms. Bridgeman was requesting a change in the law. She said the City had a very small staff to enforce this and a TNR approach would help. She then asked if the City had looked at other ordinances in other cities. Mr. Bormann and Mayor Grenke said they looked at it before. Ms. Bridgeman said that her daughter in Basehor works as a police officer where they have no cat problems and they do not euthanize any cats. Mr. Bormann said that as long as there were no complaints there was no need to enforce the ordinance, but now there are complaints and we are enforcing the ordinance. Ms. Bridgeman asked if there were pictures of cats causing damage. Members of audience shouted replies that said yes and no.

The Mayor asked Ms. Kelly if she could identify her cats. She said she could by ear notches. He asked how many were in the colony and she replied there were eight. She said she did not think the law allowed for shooting cats unless they were a menace. Magley asked if she fed the cats at her house and at the Stanton's farm. She replied that she did.

Mayor Grenke read from the City Code about how cat owner's had to be obtain a license and wear it on a collar and there was a limit of four dogs or four cats or a combination of per household.

Pam Crup (no address given) asked if the law spoke to when cats could be hurt or euthanized only for scientific experiments of if they are causing harm. Mr. Bormann read from the code that unsafe animals that cannot be impounded, may be killed. Ms. Crup continued from her seat to compare the cat problem to any animal problem, cat, squirrel, or raccoon. Mr. Lee said that with a typical wild animal, mouse, cat, raccoon, or squirrel, that if you control the food source, you control the population. Mr. Lee stated he has a problem with feeding an animal on someone else's property. Mr. Grenke said that no one owns these cats. Ms. Sharp and Kelly argued about whether Ms. Kelley was harboring and therefore owned the cats.

Mr. Bormann closed the public comment portion of the meeting and stated that the Committee should discuss the cat issue right then.

Mr. Bowers spoke again (not about cats). He complained that people were walking their dogs and allowing them to drop their feces in other people's yards and they do not clean it up. Mr. Bormann replied that it was already against the law. If he took a picture of the offense it could be prosecuted.

Kathy Higgins 201 Wigham shouted from her seat that the people who don't want dogs or cats in their yard should build fences to keep them out. Bormann and Grenke replied that is was the

pet owner's responsibility to keep their animal out of other people's yards.

Bormann asked the Committee members present one by one if they wanted to suggest a change to the current ordinance and none were inclined to make a change. Grenke thought we could look at other cities and see what they are doing.

Harline mentioned that Ms. Sharp, Ms. Kelly, Mr. Lee and Sandra Buck the Animal Control officer and he had met to try and come up with a way to end the problem by keeping the cats out of the yards of the families on Mystic Ridge that had a problem. Harline reported that it was a good meeting. Harline asked citizens who are advocates for cats and those who simply wanted the cat nuisance ended to continue to work together and not to speak badly of each other. Harline said we can never catch all the cats, so efforts to work together will be needed. Mr. Bormann stressed again that if the cats don't cause a problem.

Ms. Sharp said she wanted the City to enforce the ordinance. Mr. Harline explained that when city staff caught cats in Ms. Sharp's yard they were enforcing the ordinance. Ms. Kelly then licensed the cats.

PUBLIC SAFETY

A. City Prosecutor: No report.

B. Police Department: Bormann noted that the Committee had an Activity Report.

Lieutenant Bias gave a report on his investigation into what body cameras he would like to see the City purchase. He conducted a demonstration as to how the camera worked and handed it to the Committee members to see up close. Each camera is \$795. Lt. Bias explained that the cameras record an excellent record of exactly what the officer is viewing, doing, and what is said. They are preferred to the more expensive car cameras. In answer to a question from Grenke, Lt. Bias said that of the three originally purchased for around \$4,000, one was working. Lt. Bias reported that they are tremendously helpful in court. Infrared was popular for a while but people don't actually see in that range so the body cameras are better. Lt. Bias said in answer to a question from Grenke that he had tested several models. Bormann reported that he didn't want to buy junk. Lt. Bias said he tried a \$350 model and it was not well made. Chief Dudgeon reported that they have had good luck with the company Digital Ally. The Committee discussed one instance where a car camera kept the City out of a lawsuit. You can also use them as an attachment in the car and they are audio capable. This unit has high quality video.

Bormann asked if there was money in their budget for this. Bias said he left that up to Mr. Harline. Bormann said he was pretty sure they didn't have \$3,000 lying around. Bias said that they really felt the cameras were important and so it wasn't an "if" but a "when" question for him. Chief Dudgeon said they needed four. Bormann asked Harline how the budget looked. Harline said that he felt cameras were an important safety tool. The insurance provider in his last city felt that they were important enough to fund with grants. The city could absorb the cost (about \$4,000), but he'd like to see an offsetting amount not spent or some revenue. We had a good year for sales tax but not a good year for electric and water. Grenke asked if there was a discount for purchasing multiple cameras and Bias said there was not. He was checking to see if our insurance provider had grant money. Bias and Dudgeon reported that there were no law enforcement grants open. Dudgeon said he wanted four cameras or none.

Vollrath said that reports in the news made her aware of the need and she would like to see us buy some this year. Ward would like to look more at the budget and look at grants. Bias repeated

that finding grant money was very unlikely because Centralia is in very good financial condition. Harline said let's look for a way to fund these in the next week. Mr. Lee said he remembered getting donations from the community to partially fund the purchase of a thermal imaging camera and he thought he knew of a foundation that might help. Chief Dudgeon said he that would work for the fifth camera. Lee and Bormann spoke in favor of buying cameras, but looking for outside sources of revenue.

Chief Dudgeon introduced Matt Hensley one of two high school senior interns the Police Department has working. Mr. Hensley plans to go into the Air Force and eventually wants to pursue a career in law enforcement.

C. Fire Department

Bormann noted that there was an activity report in the packet. Chief Rusch reported that the new extrication tool was in and they were looking for a car on which to test it. Rusch also noted that the Santa suits that were in the budget to replace the 20 year old suits. He then made a plea to include a new fire truck in the budget in some coming year. In response to questions from the Committee he said they purchased a 1994 model two years ago and their oldest was a 1976 model. He would like to purchase a mini-pumper, a first attack vehicle that holds about 300 gallons. He would get rid of the 1976 and the squad truck. Magley asked if he could get down to one station and he said he could, now that we had the overpass over the railroad tracks. Chief Rusch said he has tried grants as well, but he has been the city's financial condition (good) makes it difficult. He reported that we got \$2,500 for the old 1972 we traded in during the last purchase. Bormann asked Harline if there was money available from the tobacco tax funds. Harline asked if it was being set aside and Bormann side that was his understanding. Harline reported that we get about \$3,000 per year based on a very cursory glance at the budget. A lighter truck to medical calls with water would allow them to go from a medical call to an actual structure fire.

D. Emergency Management

No report.

E. Protective Inspection

Harline reported that we have 20 single family dwelling permits so far this year and we have three commercial remodels underway.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT & FINANCE

A. Economic Development

The CREDI Board meeting minutes are in the packet. Harline reported that Russ Green gave an update on his project on Railroad Street. He has available office space and apartments. Harline reported that CREDI was giving the Live Centralia tours to teachers and they would try to have them ready in the spring to take the teachers around as they were signing contracts.

B. Park Board

Minutes from the last meeting were in the last discussed briefly. Harline noted that a friend from Fulton was very impressed about how well they ran the district swim meet here.

C. Cemetery Report

No report

D. Tree Board Report

No report

E. Library Board

Bormann noted that the agenda for the upcoming meeting was in the packet.

F. July Financial Statements

Harline reported that sales tax revenue is up. Gross receipts tax are down.

G. Bills over \$1,250

Committee review the list.

H. Other General Government

Harline explained that the newsletter would be going out in the October utility bills. He wanted to include a short survey in the newsletter. He explained that the survey would be modeled on the national citizen's survey and would ask some questions about how citizens felt about their city services and a question about how people got information from the City. He would like to encourage participation by entering everyone who submitted a completed survey to be entered into a drawing for a free pool pass. Bormann said he likes the idea as long as it is legal.

Harline reported on the City Hall renovations. The City budgeted \$50,000 for the entire project. The Board approved \$45,000 for roof repairs and a little over \$29,000 for the tuck-pointing and masonry. The mason was now reporting that an additional \$4,000 - \$6,000 would be needed to caulk the windows that apparently had no remaining caulking above some of the casings. There was also going to be some expense for new brick in addition to the amount in the bid. Harline said was not happy about the cost. Harline stated that he will have the full story for the Board of Alderman meeting in a week. Bormann and Magley suggested maybe our own crew could do the caulking for a lot cheaper.

OTHER

None

AS MAY ARISE

None.

ADJOURN

Motion was made to adjourn by Magley, seconded by Ward and approved unanimously by voice vote at 8:22 p.m.

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