

Minutes of the General Government and Public Safety Committee meeting of Monday, July 11, 2016.

The meeting was called to order by Alderman David Wilkins, Chairperson at 7:01 p.m.

I. ATTENDANCE.

Present also were Mayor Tim Grenke (late), Aldermen Landon Magley, Don Rodgers, Andrea Vollrath, Don Bormann and Jim Lee. Absent –. Also attending were City Administrator Matt Harline, Fire Chief Denny Rusch, Police Chief Larry Dudgeon, Intern Nathan Kuhn, Linda Bormann, Ken Reynolds, and James Smith of the Fireside Guard.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Those present participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS.

None.

IV. PUBLIC SAFETY.

A. Police Department

1. *Activity Report:* Wilkins asked if there were any questions or comments on the Activity Report and there were none.

2. *Other:* Police Chief Dudgeon replied to a question from Wilkins about phone problems during the storm. Chief Dudgeon noted that the problem was bigger than just Charter in terms of the phones going down at City Hall. Smith asked how many phone calls the rollover cell phone got. Chief Dudgeon replied that there were many and that the cell phone eventually failed.

B. Fire Department.

1. *Activity Report:* Wilkins asked if there were any questions or comments on the Activity Report and there were none.

2. *Other.* Chief Rusch said in reply to a question from Smith that after the storm they got many calls and took out 15 generators. Harline noted that because of the length of the outage, the generators had to be refilled. Chief Rusch said the new fire truck is almost ready. Harline asked about the response to July 4th's fireworks, and Rusch responded that it went very well, with 342 shots going off in about 24 minutes. Others in attendance agreed the show went well.

D. Emergency Management.

Storm recovery update: Harline reported that at about 6:45 am on July 7 the storm hit and power went out across the city. Harline noted that through the Missouri Public Utility Alliance, the cities of Macon, Columbia, Higginsville, Fulton, Palmyra, Shelbina, and Independence supported Centralia's employees in restoring power and storm clean up. Harline added that Centralia's Police, Fire, and Street departments blocked off dangerous streets and helped clear main thoroughfares by around 1pm. The first task was to turn the water plant back on; accomplished by noon. Harline stated that it took another day to get the full south circuit on because linemen had to work block by block in many places to fix downed lines. Wilkins noted there were poles snapped in the storm. Harline reported that Boone County Emergency Management Director, Terry Cassil, and two staff came to assist, and brought two generators for the Stuart House and the Rec Center so it could be a cooling center. Harline added that firefighters provided generators to the other two nursing homes; hundreds of citizens helped

hauling brush out to the old landfill and helping neighbors; and every city department and staff person helped, including by taking many calls. Wilkins noted that city staff arranged for meals for the workers. Harline mentioned the many groups that helped provide food: Poppy's Place, the Centralia Chamber of Commerce, Prenger's Extreme Mart, Centralia United Methodist Church, Casey's General Store, Tex Red Solo Cup BBQ, and C&R Market. And added that many citizens throughout the city helped.

Harline noted the one person who should be singled out from everyone who helped during the storm, it would be Mark Mustain, Electric Department Head, who put in over 40 hours in three days coordinating the entire effort to get back on power for the city.

Bormann asked if the city's GIS maps helped during the crisis. Harline responded that they helped a little, but if Mark Mustain was not there the response would have gone much slower. Harline explained that the GIS map shows where lines are, but knowing how they connect is different. Harline stated that a system that tells you which meters are out would have been helpful, but those systems are very expensive and GIS would not have helped with that. Smith asked how many businesses and houses were without power. Harline responded that all but northwest corner of the city was out, estimating 80-90 percent of citizens were without power. Harline added that what made it more of a challenge was that sometimes multiple houses on a block had damaged lines.

Harline asked the Committee to approve the reasonable cost of up to \$6,000 per day for Dotson Logging, Inc., to help remove brush and debris from throughout the city, noting that without their help, it will take weeks to clean up the city. Lee and Magley said they think Dotson should continue to clean it up. Rodgers asked is Dotson was efficient, and Lee and Harline confirmed that they are very efficient. **Lee made a motion to approve funds at \$6,000 per day to Dotson Logging, Inc., to remove brush and debris from throughout the city until the job is complete; seconded by Vollrath. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

Mayor Grenke, per citizen request, asked if Centralia's emergency action plan was used. Harline responded that yes, especially because of working with the County's Emergency Management Director, Terry Caassil. Mayor Grenke, also per citizen request, asked about storm sirens. Harline responded that he talked to Cassil about that and was told that the meteorologists who make those calls did not issue any warning for the sirens. Harline added that Cassil recommended an "after-event" staff meeting.

Harline noted that earlier in the year, City Clerk, Heather Russell had recommended that the city set up a Facebook Page; this webpage was invaluable during the storm as a way for City Hall to communicate with citizens throughout the storm and especially when the phones were down. Harline reported that over 400 new people liked the page during the storm.

E. Protective Inspection.

1. Occupancy Permit presentation by Nathan Kuhn: Harline noted that this presentation is per request of the Mayor on whether the city can do rental property inspections. Kuhn and Harline noted that staff had looked into the legality of doing rental or occupancy inspections in Centralia, and so far the answer seems to be yes. Kuhn presented about the occupancy inspections done by the cities of Moberly and Lebanon. Lee asked whether we have the inspection checklists for these cities; Kuhn responded yes. Kuhn noted that Columbia does specifically rental inspections, and can because all landowners must have business licenses. Kuhn referenced the 2001 court case of Ashworth v. City of Moberly about rental inspections in which the City of Moberly won. Mayor Grenke clarified that different parts of the International

Code Council (ICC) can be adopted; Harline acknowledged stating that the code that Centralia could adopt that would cover these inspections would be the ICC's International Property Maintenance Code. Bormann asked whether Moberly and Lebanon are charter cities; Harline said he believes they are. Kuhn noted that both these cities are smaller than Columbia and more comparable to Centralia, and that both cities have been very approachable and helpful in providing information. Both Moberly and Lebanon do occupancy inspections for all residential dwellings, rented or owner-occupied. Moberly's Fire Department manages their occupancy inspections; Lebanon's occupancy inspections are through their Community Development Department. Both cities enforce this section of their city code through ordinance injunctions and potentially through appropriate court orders and fines. Moberly regulates the process through occupancy permits; Lebanon regulates enforcement by managing the utilities. The training and/or experience of both city's inspectors is discussed, as well as how much each inspector is paid and how much this program costs each city. Boone County's entry-level building inspector costs were also shown. Kuhn noted that Moberly's inspector stressed the importance of enforcement of proper egress for windows.

Harline explained that if Centralia were to do occupancy inspections, we would want to have the same person also do building inspections; the money currently being spent by the city for Boone County inspectors could be used as part of the salary for our own in-house inspector, who might be able to do both residential and commercial inspections and occupancy inspections. The positives of an in-house inspector are that they are close; the negatives are that they will go on vacation and they will be in charge of all inspections. There would be significant cost to an in-house inspector. Mayor Grenke ask to pull up the checklists on screen. Harline explains that this presentation was just informational and that more research can be done. Lee says he talked with a few landowners and that those he talked to were not opposed to inspections, but he asked if there is enough need in town to justify inspections. Kuhn noted that the inspector in Moberly said that occupancy inspections decreased fire calls by 2/3rds. Mayor Grenke would like to see the legal standing for 4th class cities to do these inspections. Rodgers said that renters to not maintain property as well as a home-owner, so this program could be a benefit to landlords. Mayor Grenke noted that many landlords to not live in town and that managers may not maintain the properties well either. Bormann asked how often inspections happen; Kuhn and Harline responded that it depends on the city, but Moberly and Lebanon do them each change of occupancy but not more than once per year. There was discussion about whether inspections could be for just rental properties or for all properties; the Committee asked staff to find a clearer answer. Linda Bormann and others brought up questions about the inspection checklists; Kuhn responded that in the end, it is the City Code, not the inspection checklist, that is the final determinate. Linda Bormann noted that many landowners' tenants do not report problems with their properties. Magley asked if other cities do these inspections; Kuhn responded yes. Ken Reynolds said that when he lived in Hannibal, that owners can get property tax reductions for remodels in return for home inspections, and then the renter will be charged if there is any damage to the building. Harline does not know of a city Centralia's size in Missouri doing occupancy/rental inspections.

Harline asked what information the Committee wants. Wilkins wants cases and precedents supporting these inspections, especially for 4th class cities and for whether cities can only do rental inspections or must to occupancy inspections for all buildings. Mayor asked for what 4th class cities are allowed to do. Harline noted also researching how much need there is.

V. GENERAL GOVERNMENT AND FINANCE.

A. Economic Development.

Harline noted that the Chamber of Commerce meeting change to the 19th.

B. Park Board

Wilkins stated that the agenda for the Park Board is in the packet and meeting notes. Greke noted the cleanup ongoing. Harline noted 25 percent increase in pool attendance this year.

C. Cemetery Advisory Committee.

Wilkins noted the information in the packet.

D. Tree Board.

No report.

E. Library Board

Wilkins noted the information in the packet and the agenda for the meeting on the 14th.

F. Finance

Financial statements for June 2016 were in the agenda packet.

G. Bills over \$1,250

No comments.

H. Other General Government.

1. *On-call Engineering RFQ*: Harline asked to table this for later, but based on Committee comments, insurance requirements will be reduced and changed.

VII. OTHER.

None

VIII. AS MAY RISE.

Harline explained that two of the three department heads will be absent from the August 1st meeting, so he asked if the Committee is willing to hold a combined Public Works and Public Utilities Committee meeting and General Government and Public Safety Committee meeting on August 8.

Wilkins asked about the timeline for the Comprehensive Plan process. Harline responded that on the 13th an advertisement asking citizens to apply for Committee Member positions would go out in the paper and that more information would be found on the City website, and that the first meetings would be in August or September. Harline asked for suggestions from the Board for Committee Member positions.

Mayor Grenke noted that on the 18th he has been asked to appoint two new Fire Department members, Delwyn Duncan and James H. Morris.

IX. ADJOURN.

Magley made a motion to adjourn the Committee meeting. Volrath seconded the motion which was then approved by unanimous voice vote at 8:37p.m.