

CITY OF FULTON

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

FEBRUARY 12, 2024

5:30 P.M.

(Held at Cattail Park, Fulton, IL)

Regular Meeting

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Wendy Ottens at 5:30 p.m. On roll call, Alderpersons Burggraaf, Wilkin, Boonstra, King, Mask, Banker and VanKampen were present. Alderperson Brondyke was absent. Police Chief Neblung, Public Works Director Sikkema, City Attorney Huizenga, Business Manager Garibay and City Clerk Wade were also in attendance.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

New Appointments by Mayor Wendy -None

Recognition of Volunteers – None

Communications from Visitors –

Business Manager, Tammy Garibay, introduced Matthew Pivit. He is the Municipal Account Manager from Republic Services. He came to the City council meeting to explain why garbage service was delayed for pickup in January. Alderperson Mask said that she received many calls from residents in her ward. A lot of them were complaints were that know one could reach Republic Services to ask them about the status of their garbage pickup.

Matthew asked if everyone's issue with Republic is weather related, all agreed it was. He went on the say that he has never had a situation like this happen since he's been with Republic (2014). He told the Council that he

stopped in to City Hall on Thursday, to tell us that due to the snow and cold temperatures, garbage service was going to be canceled for Thursday and Friday of that week. He said he would push recyclable pickup to the next Monday and Tuesday.

When that Monday came, it was too cold for the trucks to run their routes because they are diesel and could freeze up. Also, the roads in all towns were ice-packed and too dangerous to travel on. He said that their drivers were told that if a street looked too dangerous for a pickup, just leave it. Service got so far behind that week. Republic did not cancel services in Clinton that week, they just couldn't get caught up. He apologized, also stating that no one can control the weather.

He went on to say that Republic has the ability to contact every resident by phone to let them know the status of their garbage pickup. When he initially met with Fulton city officials, he asked for resident's phone numbers. He was told no, the City would not release phone numbers. It is a City Ordinance not to give out resident's private information..

He said if they would have had phone numbers available to call residents, the situation would not have been nearly as bad as it was. It was an unfortunate situation.

Matthew noted that Republic Services will be updating their customer communication system soon to avoid this from happening again. They will implement other ways to get resident's phone numbers into their new system, possibly through advertising asking residents to call and give Republic their information. A few of those present said that Republic did have their phone number and they did get a phone call from Republic about the delay in service.

Business Manager, Garibay stated that it is a City Ordinance not to give out this information.

Mayor Wendy said that a City newsletter will be sent out shortly and she has included Republic's phone number and is encouraging everyone to download the Republic app on their phones.

Discussion continued regarding the garbage and recycling bins. The lids must be completely closed in order to have them emptied. Residents can call and request a second bin for an extra charge per month. If a can is damaged by Republic, they will replace it. If it is damaged by a resident, there will be a charge to replace it at cost of \$100.00.

When asked the question about resident's getting refunds for missed pickups, the answer is no according to Matthew. They still picked up the garbage even though it was delayed.

Under communications from visitors, Mayor Wendy asked Zach Ratcliff to speak to the Council.

Zach. He was aware of the mold problems at the City Council chambers, due to the fact that the Council is meeting at the Cattail Park. He asked if the building was under mold remediation. The answer was no, we are still in the process of determining what direction we should go. Zach said that since meetings will be held at the Cattail Park for a while does that mean there will be no video posted of the Council meetings. That is correct, the City does not have the capability to record meetings here.

Zach also asked why don't residents deserve a refund from the City for the lack of garbage service? He does not have a contract with Republic, he has a contract with the City for forced service per the ordinance that says I have to use Republic Services. He asked what the actual contract says.

Business Manager Garibay stated that the contract states that the City can contest the services provided from Republic Services in writing. Republic has 30 days to correct the situation or we can take legal action to terminate the contract. The contract is not up until 2027.

Zach then added that whatever the direction the City goes as far as rebuilding the Council Chambers, please be completely aware of the technology that needs to be added into the cost. It needs to be up-to-date and ready to grow with the technology of the future for the next generation. Mayor Wendy assured him that this is the Council's vision as well.

Business Manager, Tammy Garibay, introduced 2 new employees to the Council members. They are Korri Marcum, Utility Billing Clerk and Aley Hamling, Business Manager in Training. Everyone welcomed them.

Mayor Wendy asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion to approve the City Council meeting minutes from January 27, 2024, the meeting minutes from the Budget Workshop meeting held on January 27, 2024, and the Bill List all in one motion.

Motion to approve, Alderperson King made the motion, second by Alderperson Boonstra.

Alderperson Mask had a couple of questions regarding the bill list asking for an explanation of the invoice paid to Isle of Rhodes charged under Cardmember Service. It was for pizza for the annual employee Christmas party held at the Cattail Park.

Alderperson Mask had a question regarding the bill list asking what the Chicago Regional Co. was and Tori Wade dues meant. Business Manager Garibay explained that it was for Union dues.

On roll call, all yes. Motion passed.

Business - There were no action items.

Committee of the Whole - Discussion items

The City's Schedule of Fees was discussed. Business Manager Garibay pointed out that the City does not enforce these fees. The last time this document was updated was 2018, that is when prices were changed for building permits. Garibay stated that this might be something that we look over in the future.

Continued the discussion on the state of the City Council chambers. Public Works Director, Eric Sikkema, stated that he is still waiting on bids from two contractors, those contractors do have the plans for the new building now. He has spoken to the electrician and has gotten a quote from him. These are bids for a rebuild on the original site.

Business Manager, Tammy Garibay, said when the bids come in they will be gone over carefully to make sure technology upgrades are included. Sikkema said a lot of it is already there, just the design of the building's infrastructure will allow for easier access to running cables, etc.

Mayor Wendy asked about the possibility of having an entrance on the north side of the building as a handicap entrance. Sikkema said that is not in the original plans and if wanting to add that, the plans would have to be completely redone. The plans do include the main entrance being handicap accessible.

Business Manager, Garibay, is still waiting to hear from the insurance company. If she doesn't hear back from them by mid-week, she will reach out to them.

Aldersperson King asked Eric Sikkema about the cost of the demolition of the old building. He replied that early estimates are between \$5,000 to \$6,000.

Aldersperson Banker said that until we get our estimates nothing else needs to be discussed.

Continued discussion on the need for a City Administrator. Aldersperson Mask stated she believes the City does need a City Administrator as quickly

as possible. She thinks someone in this position usually has a vision of what's best for the city and turns that into an action. That position interacts with the public, staff, and the council, playing an essential role for the City.

Mayor Wendy asked that every Council member give their opinion on the position of a City Administrator and if we need one or not.

Aldersperson Wilkin asked Tammy Garibay if she had gotten ahold of the auditors to ask them to prepare a report regarding this need. Tammy said she had contacted them. It will probably be a zoom meeting. As soon as she gets a date and time from them, she will let everyone know. She has asked the Mayor to attend and the City Clerk, Tori Wade to sit in on the meeting to be a non-bias participant and to record.

Aldersperson Wilkin feels that in light of this year's budget and in talking with department heads, she feels we do not need a City Administrator at this time. She said that doesn't mean we won't need one in the future, but not for this year.

Aldersperson Banker said he is open to it, but would like to wait and take a look at it later. Being only 6 weeks into the new year, Tammy hasn't had a whole lot of time to take on the role of City Administrator. He wants to see what the audit says, get through the budget, see how the dept. heads work within their budget. If everything is operating well into the next 3 or 4 months, we can go back and re-evaluate the need for the position.

Aldersperson Burggraaf said that she has concerns, the City has just brought on 2 new faces in, Tammy's not going to be staying here. She stated that obviously she comes from an organization where there's oversight, there's a vision and collaboration that happens on a different level. She stated she is a department manager, but she does not have the time to take on the tasks of the vision and oversee all of that. Are our dept. heads willing to take on that responsibility? She thinks conversations need to be had about that. She would like to see what the auditor's have to say,

but right now she is in favor of heading towards a City Administrator. She isn't opposed to giving it some time to play out and see where the greatest need is. Mindy has also taken it upon herself to meet with neighboring City Administrators to get their opinion on the role of a City Administrator.

Alderman Boonstra believes that eventually we do need a CA, but right now he wants to look at the audit that is coming up to get their opinion. He has also discussed with Chief Neblung as to the salaries in surrounding communities of our size. In the state of IL we're looking at \$100,000.00 a year for someone who is going to do the grant writing, city projects, interacting with the public. He stated that he really believes the city needs a code officer before a city administrator because of some of the disarray of some of the properties the City has. Boonstra's opinion at this time is the City needs a Code Enforcement Officer at this time more than a City Administrator.

Alderman VanKampen stated she is in favor of having a City Administrator. She stated that this city has a 2 million dollar business here and it is the taxpayer's money and this Council responsible as to where it goes. She feels that we have great department heads, but they have their own roles and their plates full.

Alderman King stated he feels that the City needs a City Administrator. He agreed with Alderman VanKampen that the department heads are doing a great job, but their plates are full and adding to it should not be an option. King stated that he does agree that a Code Enforcement Officer is needed, but a City Administrator is needed more at this time. King said there is a lot of things that need to be looked at before we get a code enforcement officer. King feels that if we wait another year before looking for a new City Administrator, it could be yet another year before we actually hire one. He feels we have stopped looking for one.

Mayor Wendy said that she felt it was a great discussion. But it was skipped over that there are 3 department heads, Tammy Garibay is one as Business Manager.

Committee Reports -

Aldersperson VanKampen requested that the Mayor's report be in writing as well as verbal.

Aldersperson Brondyke arrived at 6:25 p.m.

Discussion was held regarding the \$82,000.00 that is in the budget right now for a City Administrator. That money should not be spent on anything else.

Chief Neblung wanted to clarify that the City Administrator position is still posted and there have been no applicants.

Tammy Garibay handed out paperwork regarding MFT and asked Eric Sikkema to explain it. He explained the roads that need to be fixed using these funds.

Discussion was held on the quote for the new website, it will be on for an action item at the next meeting. Business Manager Garibay said our website is absolutely necessary. The current content management system is outdated. Aldersperson Wilkin asked if it would be possible to start accepting water payments through our website. Garibay said that would be a whole new module for the website and it's not in the budget to do this at this time.

Chief Neblung explained Lynn Roth's credentials and said he would provide samples of his website work.

Aldersperson Mask brought up the question as to whether or not there should be a cap on the amount staff can spend without Council approval.

Aldersperson Wilkin discussed the 10th Avenue Park project. Aldersperson VanKampen stated that she believes the park should be completed in one project, not in pieces. Discussion was held on where those funds are coming from.

Aldersperson Mask reported on the Tourism committee meeting. She informed the Council that the “Embrace Winter” event was fun and the Martin House Museum open house was well attended. She also explained the Tourism committee schedule and the new advertisement that is being distributed.

Discussion was held on the sound system for the downtown area. It was donated to the City. (it’s not the one Dutch Days uses).

Aldersperson VanKampen asked that the Mayor’s report be in written form as well as a verbal report. The Mayor said that she would do that.

Chief Neblung discussed the “Use of Force Deescalation” simulator that is available at the Fulton Fire Dept. for training purposes. He invited everyone to stop by and try it out.

Business Manager Gariibay explained the TIF funds that need to be paid from 2019, 2020, 2021.

Discussion was held on the digital signs for downtown and other areas in town where they could be placed.

Wendy asked for a motion to adjourn the regular meeting.

Aldersperson Brondyke made the motion. Aldersperson VanKampen seconded.

All were in favor, motion passed.

Regular meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Mayor Wendy asked for a motion to go into closed session for purposes of litigation.

Aldersperson Wilkin made the motion. Aldersperson Banker seconded.

Council entered into closed session at 7:15 p.m.

Mayor Wendy asked for a motion to adjourn.

Aldersperson Boonstra made the motion. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tori Wade

City Clerk