

CITY OF FULTON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES MARCH 11, 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 Banker, Boonstra, Brondyke, Burggraaf, King, Mask, VanKampen, and Wilkin were present. 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 -

Scott Hutchison spoke to the Council about the damage done to his property during the 2023 Dutch Days festival. It was stated that during the vendor set-up day (Thursday before the festival) that there were 2 different incidents where someone drove their vehicle through his yard, damaging his grass, garden, and flowers. There were pictures taken of the damage, but no pictures of the possible violators.

Hutchison stated that he has asked several times who is going to pay for the damage. Police Chief Neblung feels that because there is no one to charge, the Dutch Days Committee should pay for it. Business Manager Tammy Garibay asked Alderperson Mask, (she is the Dutch Days Festival co-chairman, if the Dutch Days committee) if they have looked into this with their insurance company. She said they had not done that, but she will look into it. He also was concerned about vendors setting up in front of his construction business.

Kevin Heun addressed the Council concerning the unsightly property located on 14th Avenue in Fulton. The grass and weeds are out of control, junk all around the property and a lot of feral cats living in the garage. He stated it is an eyesore for anyone coming into Fulton. Heun asked Police Chief on the status of what is being done about this according to the City's ordinances. Neblung said unfortunately this situation has been a work in progress. He explained the rights of the homeowner and City ordinances regarding the property. The property owner has been sent several letters addressing the issue and has been given several fines. They have all been ignored by the resident. The City has suggested that the resident put up a fence. Chief Neblung

assured Mr. Heun that he will continue to address this issue and keep him informed on the progress. Chief Neblung mentioned that this is why the City needs a Code Enforcement officer to handle these types of problems.

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

Motion to approve the City Council meeting minutes from February 26, 2024, the Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes from February 26, 2024, and the Bill List.

Aldersperson Brondyke asked Public Works Director Sikkema about the Snow Route signs. Why are they posted on streets that are already marked No Parking? Public Works Director Sikkema explained that the new Snow Route signs are there to identify the streets in Fulton that are the actual snow route. Using existing poles saved the City the extra cost of new poles.

Aldersperson Mask asked about the signs' cost, it was \$22,000.00. Business Manager Garibay said it came out of the Cannabis Fund because Sikkema had already submitted for MFT funds for the year and you can't submit for MFT funds more than once. Sikkema also said that for anything over \$20,000.00 in funds needed, he has to go out for bid for signs. He had already spent \$5,000.00 on signs earlier in the year. So he would have gone over the allotted amount through MFT funds.

Aldersperson VanKampen made the motion. Aldersperson Banker seconded.

On roll call, all yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Wendy asked Business Manager Garibay to explain the Bill List. She explained that pre-paid bills generally have a time sensitive due date that the City has to pay in order to avoid late fees, etc. Some of these due dates do not align with the Council meetings, when the bills are approved. They are usually electric, telephone, credit cards, etc.

Business -

Mayor Wendy stated to the Council that the motion as written in the agenda should be worded differently. She states that motion should read:

Mayor Wendy asked for a motion to approve the acceptance of the City's Business Manager, Tammy Garibay, to fill in as City Administrator **by herself** until November 2024, before we decide to hire a new City Administrator.

Mayor Wendy would like a motion on this because she doesn't feel we need to keep having this same conversation at every meeting. We can address the situation in November 2024. She states that it has been six months now and we're doing fine. Mayor Wendy said we do not need a City Administrator until at least November. At that time, we can start with the applications if necessary.

Aldersperson Wilkin made the motion to approve. Aldersperson Brondyke seconded.

Aldersperson VanKampen asked that the motion be thrown out because on October 23 of 2023, the Council voted and all agreed on the following motion:

Motion to approve Tammy Garibay, Business Manager, to take over the responsibilities of the City Administrator position starting October 4, 2023 through January 1, 2025. Starting January 1, 2024, she will work three days in the office, one day from home. Her position will stay union per her request with no interaction with employees regarding discipline at all. Aldersperson VanKampen said that we all agreed to that. Mayor Wendy agreed.

Aldersperson King asked, why is it on the agenda again? Mayor Wendy wants discussion on this, she does not want to go back and forth on this every meeting.

Aldersperson King asked Mayor Wendy, why is it still being put on the agenda. Mayor Wendy stated that it has to be on the agenda until there is a motion made. That hasn't been done yet.

Aldersperson King replied that the only thing we have not made a decision on is whether or not to hire a City Administrator. Aldersperson Wilkin agreed that this motion needs to be reworded, Aldersperson King wants it to be removed, it has already been voted on.

Aldersperson Burggraff asked for some clarification on this. Business Manager Garibay agreed that a decision needs to be made as to whether or not we need a City Administrator first, before we can go on with this.

Business Manager Garibay suggested that the motion be dropped, all discussion be dropped, until the Personnel Committee has met and given their recommendation. They need to make the recommendation, not that you have to agree with their recommendation, but everybody should respect their recommendation.

Aldersperson Burggraff said as far as she is concerned there never has been a motion or a vote stating that we are not going to hire a new City Administrator. Business Manager Garibay said that is correct. Aldersperson Burggraff feels that the search for a new City Administrator should still be in motion. Applications should still be accepted. If we are not going to pursue a new City Administrator at this time, then we should move on with the other needs of the City, for example, a Code Enforcement Officer, a Grant Writer, etc.

Aldersperson Mask asked what other cities our size are doing about a City Administrator. Mayor Wendy said that she has contacted surrounding communities with less than 5,000 people and they do not have a City Administrator, just have a Business Manager.

Aldersperson King requested to take the motion off the table.

Aldersperson Wilkin and Aldersperson Brondyke were asked to rescind their motions. They did so.

It was stated that Garibay has been working by herself since Mr. Clark's retirement on October 4, 2023. She will continue that job until her retirement in December 2024.

Aldersperson VanKampen wants to make a motion that this go to the Personnel Committee.

Committee of the Whole -

Discuss any new information about the construction of the new council chambers. Public Works Director Eric Sikkema said that he does have one bid back. He is still waiting for others to come in.

A lengthy discussion was held on the City of Fulton's Business Registration form. Chief Neblung said business owners are already filling out a business contact list for him. He asked the Council if they want a business registration or a business license? Council members agreed just a business registration.

Discussion was held on charging new businesses a fee for this registration process. Business Manager Garibay suggested that due to the paperwork involved, there should be a fee. She stated that any new business that comes to town has to have a sales tax identification number and she does get those reports from the State. With the new website being implemented, it will be so much easier for people to navigate, the form could be put there.

Also, any new business has to come to City Hall to have the water put in their name.

Mayor Wendy stated that for the next meeting, City Attorney Huizenga will have an ordinance drafted regarding business registration procedures. Chief Neblung said it would be a good idea to check with other cities to see what they are doing. Chief would like to present it for review at the next meeting.

Committee Meetings -

Aldersperson Wilkin stated that the company that is renovating 10th Avenue Park wants to get started as soon as possible (May 1). They have a lot of school playgrounds to do over the summer and they'd like to get our project done as soon as possible.

Aldersperson VanKampen spoke about bicycle rentals for Fulton. Rental stations would be placed at the Windmill, the Marina and out by Shear Class. She explained that at one time Fulton was going to partner with Clinton on this project, all the paperwork was ready to go, the sponsors were in place but Fulton did not follow through with it at that time. Aldersperson VanKampen mentioned there may be money available through the Blackhawk Hills Council.

There was also money available to have the original artist repaint the Lincolnway sign. That project was never finished.

Alderson Mask added that Lesley Webster, the City's Tourism Director, mentioned the possibility of having bike rentals for Fulton at the last Tourism Committee meeting. She would work with Grow Clinton on this project. The request came from the owner of the AmericInn in Fulton. Lesley is going to check it out with Clinton.

Going on the the Tourism Committee, Alderson Mask spoke on the upcoming Dutch Days, it is their 50th celebration this year. She spoke of programs that are being held in the future at the Martin House Museum.

Rebecca Huizenga asked for volunteers to stand at barricades to make sure no one goes around them at events. Council members suggested contacting the high school to see if any students would want to do this to get their hours in for the Impact Program. It was suggested that maybe a request for volunteers be placed on Facebook.

Mayor Wendy addressed Alderson Mask telling her that the City's standing committees can not be at a personal residence. It's a protection for the home owner and it also needs to be publicized.

Mayor's report. Mayor Wendy asked if there were any questions. She did point out that a feasibility study for York Township students to come to River Bend School District will be on March 21. Mayor Wendy did write a letter of support for York Township students to attend River Bend School District.

A discussion was held concerning the "Migrant Plan of Action" for cities. Smaller towns may be at risk.

Chief Neblung asked the Council for clarification on the City's Special Event Application. The last revision was in 2022. He asked if the City is still charging the fee or not? There is a permit fee of \$25.00, a cleanup deposit, putting up and tearing down barricades. The Council never decided whether or not they wanted to charge the fees. The Council didn't want to charge anyone for the first year, now the second year has come and no one is paying these fees. He needs some input in order to update the form. At the time, the Council was going to use the current application for a year, without charging, to see if it is something that is needed. Chief Neblung said having the application filled out was helpful to his department because they knew what streets needed to be barricaded, approximately how many people would attend, etc.

Alderson King believes there should be a fee charged, in order to offset the cost of having to pay extra police officers to attend these events without Chief Neblung having to worry about going over his overtime budget.

Chief Neblung would like to see these applications be accompanied by a \$150.00 fee to cover the administrative costs of the events or whatever the Council feels is a good amount, it will be just a flat fee for all applicants.

Discussion held on the amount to charge for these events to be fair to everyone.

Chief Neblung asked the Council if they feel the application is important? Everyone agreed that it is. He then asked if the Council wants to do an ordinance to lock the Special Event Application in place, do they want to charge a fee. It was suggested that the fee could be \$50.00 for every 24-hour period the event is being held.

Chief Neblung will revise the application, discuss it with Rebecca (City Attorney) and bring it back to the Council.

Aldersperson Brondyke said there should be a 90 or 120 day waiting period before this Ordinance comes into effect, to give the public time to learn about it. That was agreed on.

It was also suggested that this application be used for renting the new bandshell, adding a refundable \$250.00 deposit in case there is any damage.

Aldersperson Wilkin would like to put a sign at the new bandshell advertising that it is for rent for special events, such as churches, etc.

Business Managers Report -

Business Manager Tammy Garibay asked if any Council member had any questions about the budget. There were no questions. Garibay would like to put it on the agenda for the next meeting to pass the budget.

Regarding the Windmill Cultural Center: the City has asked for a business plan, 3 different quotes for geo-thermal and 3 years of financial information. Garibay said she has not received anything from them. The Council advised Tammy to reach out to them one more time. Garibay want to leave this in the budget for now.

Tammy also reminded everyone who is required to do so, fill out the Statement of Economic Interests and mail to the County Clerk. The deadline is May 1, 2024. She also reminded everyone to give their ideas to Chief Neblung for his classes.

Mayor Wendy asked for a motion to go into Closed Session to discuss personnel.

Aldersperson King made the motion. Aldersperson Wilkin seconded.

Council entered Closed Session at 6:41 p.m.

Council motion to adjourn regular meeting. All were in favor. Adjourned 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tori Wade
City Clerk