

CITY OF MUSCATINE
IN-DEPTH CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
Council Chambers – 7:00 p.m. – June 11, 2015

Mayor Hopkins called the City Council meeting for Thursday, June 11, 2015, to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmembers present were Rehwaldt, Fitzgerald, Natvig, Shihadeh, Bynum, Phillips, and Spread.

The first item on the agenda was a review of the draft ordinance establishing a Convention & Visitors Board.

City Administrator Gregg Mandsager stated the proposed ordinance establishing the Board has been modeled after the Recreation Advisory Commission. He stated members of the Board would be appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Council. He stated the adoption of the ordinance is the final step in transitioning the CVB into a city operation.

Councilmember Rehwaldt asked who the CVB would report to and he was told it was the City Administrator.

City Administrator Mandsager stated there would be one member of the Board from the county and that the members would represent the various aspects of the tourism industry.

Councilmember Rehwaldt stated he felt that someone on the Board should have skills in sales and marketing.

City Administrator Mandsager stated there will be a representative from the Chamber, five at-large members, and one member representing the county. He stated he was sure someone with marketing and communication skills could be found to serve on the Board.

The next item on the agenda was a review of Road Use Taxes and street projects.

Public Works Director Randy Hill stated the city is in the process of planning its 2015 Road Use Tax projects. He stated the city currently has additional funds due to the increased gas tax. He stated the city also has funds available from the 1% local open sales tax which have been used in the past. He stated this year staff is suggesting these funds be used for the construction of the roadway between Steamboat Way and Diana Queen Drive. He explained the importance of finishing Diana Queen Drive. He stated the estimated cost for constructing the roadway is \$350,000 and would take approximately six to eight weeks to complete. He stated completion of the project is needed prior to next year's Mulberry Avenue Construction Project.

There was discussion concerning possible assistance from the current owner of Steamboat Way.

Councilmember Natvig asked about the length of the roadway and Mr. Hill stated it was approximately 750'.

There was then discussion concerning the proposal to reclassify E. 9th Street between Mulberry Avenue and Cedar Street to a one way.

Councilmember Shihadeh stated it was his understanding that prior to this year, the city had spent approximately \$500,000 on overlay projects, and City Administrator Mandsager stated that was correct.

Councilmember Shihadeh asked if Mr. Hill was talking about 2016 projects, and Mr. Hill stated he was referring to the 2015 construction season.

City Administrator Mandsager explained funding that will be received in the future.

Councilmember Rehwaldt stated he receives many calls concerning the condition of Mississippi Drive.

Mr. Hill stated City Council will be asked to approve an agreement with the engineering design firm at the July 2, 2015 City Council meeting. He stated the anticipated construction date is 2017 and that design work will occur in 2016. He stated completion of the project will totally change the look of the downtown area and riverfront.

Mr. Hill stated the city will not be spending any money to make repairs to Mississippi Drive since it will be torn up once construction begins.

Councilmember Bynum asked Mr. Hill if he would stay on until Mississippi Drive is completed.

Mr. Hill stated he will contribute in any way he can to make Muscatine better.

City Administrator Mandsager stated that once the agreement is in place, there will be a lot of public input meetings. He stated that at the July 2nd meeting, City Council will actually be approving three agreements. One will be with the engineering firm and the other two will be Blue Zones related.

Mr. Hill ended his presentation by asking City Council how they felt about the construction of Diana Queen Drive.

It was the consensus of City Council to proceed with the construction of the roadway between Steamboat Way and Diana Queen Drive.

The next item on the agenda was a review of the proposed draft agreement for the Greenwood Cemetery steps.

City Administrator Mandsager stated approval of the proposed agreement by City Council would provide the framework for moving the cemetery steps project forward. He stated if there are no objections from City Council, the proposed agreement will be placed on next week's agenda.

Councilmember Shihadeh asked if the proponents of the cemetery steps project were happy with the agreement, and City Administrator Mandsager answered yes.

The final item on the agenda was an overview of the ambulance operations.

Fire Chief Jerry Ewers was present to give a power point presentation on the ambulance operations. He stated that Mike Hartman and Darrell Janssen were available to assist in answering questions from Council.

Chief Ewers began his presentation by discussing the highlights of the ambulance operations. He briefly touched on the organizational chart, part-time ambulance attendants, full daily authorized staffing, the normal daily staffing/lineup, and the EMS response cycle.

Chief Ewers, speaking in reference to the map showing the Iowa response area, stated the map does not show Illinois but it is part of the department's response area. He thanked MAGIC for their assistance in providing the maps for tonight's presentation.

Chief Ewers, in reviewing EMS activities, stated Muscatine is one of the few ambulance services in Iowa that does critical care transport. He then went over the pie chart showing hospital transfers by destination.

Chief Ewers gave an overview of inter-facility transports which means transferring patients from one hospital to another hospital. He stated that Trinity of Muscatine is a Level 4 and Iowa City a Level 1.

Chief Ewers, speaking in reference to out-of-town trips, stated the department has seen a 100% increase in out-of-town trips. He pointed out that 48% of the revenue generated from the ambulance operation comes from out-of-town trips.

Chief Ewers, in reviewing overtime costs, stated that overtime is charged to the Fire Department's budget.

Chief Ewers then listed the Top 10 reasons for ambulance calls. Speaking in reference to the ambulance fleet, he stated the average cost for a Type 3 ambulance (Ford E450 gasoline) is \$155,000. He stated the average cost for a Type 1 ambulance (Ford F-450 Diesel) is \$175,000 with an air ride option for an additional \$7,000. He stated the Type 1 ambulance is a more rugged vehicle. He stated the common complaint from patients is the ride is too bumpy. He pointed out that the Type 1 ambulance does have the option for air ride.

Chief Ewers then gave a financial overview of the department and reviewed the 2014 ambulance rate survey. He stated the department's rates are adjusted on July 1st to coincide with Wellmark rate changes.

Chief Ewers' power point showed the grants that have been awarded to the ambulance operations. He then reviewed the department's quality improvement efforts pointing out that our department is the only one in the state that offers cardiac enzyme testing in the field. He stated the department provides preventive and educational opportunities to the community.

Chief Ewers then gave an overview of staffing for the department. He stated the SAFER grant applied for earlier this year will provide four additional positions for the department.

Councilmember Spread asked if we know anything about the grant application, and Chief Ewers said not yet.

Chief Ewers then reviewed the issues the department is facing or is planning for. He stated his biggest concern is staffing.

Councilmember Shihadeh thanked Chief Ewers for his presentation. Speaking in reference to the issues the department is facing, asked if he should be concerned.

Chief Ewers stated there are plenty of plans and 28E agreements in place. He stated the shortage in staff is concerning but the department does have checks and balances in place. He stated the city could not afford to operate on what ifs.

Councilmember Shihadeh stated he appreciated the contingency plans.

There was discussion concerning the difficulty of quantifying the staffing needs of the Fire Department/Ambulance Operations as well as discussion on the qualifications required for part-time ambulance drivers.

Councilmember Bynum stated the only way the citizens of Muscatine are going to feel safe is if we have a Fire Department that is fully staffed.

City Administrator Mandsager stated department staffing is typically something that is discussed during budget sessions.

Councilmember Fitzgerald asked about the revenue the city receives for providing services to the county.

Chief Ewers stated the city receives \$31,400 from the county. He pointed out that the majority of the department's calls come from within the city limits.

City Administrator Mandsager stated he hoped that City Council found Chief Ewers' presentation helpful. He stated he would like to continue to have each department give a presentation on its operations prior to the budget sessions.

#23021. Councilmember Rehwaldt moved to go into Closed Session 8:26 p.m. per Iowa Code 21.5 to discuss proposed property acquisition. Seconded by Councilmember Spread. All ayes: Councilmembers Rehwaldt, Fitzgerald, Natvig, Shihadeh, Bynum, Phillips, and Spread. Motion carried.

Mayor Hopkins called the Closed Session to order at 8:26 p.m. Councilmembers present were Rehwaldt, Fitzgerald, Natvig, Shihadeh, Bynum, and Spread. Also present were City Administrator Gregg Mandsager, Public Works Director Randy, and City Engineer Jim Edgmond.

#23022. Councilmember Fitzgerald moved to leave closed session at 8:37 p.m. Seconded by Councilmember Shihadeh. All ayes: Councilmembers Rehwaldt, Fitzgerald, Natvig, Shihadeh, Bynum, and Spread. Motion carried.

#22023. Councilmember Shihadeh moved the meeting be adjourned at 8:38 p.m. Seconded by Councilmember Fitzgerald. All ayes; motion carried.

Gregg Mandsager, City Administrator