

CITY OF MUSCATINE
IN-DEPTH MINUTES
Council Chambers – 7:00 p.m. – April 8, 2010

Mayor Dick O'Brien called the City Council In-Depth meeting for Thursday, April 8, 2010, to order at 7 p.m. Councilmembers present were LeRette, Fitzgerald, Natvig, Shihadeh, Bynum, Roby, and Lange. Also present were City Administrator Gregg Mandsager, Finance Director Nancy Lueck, Public Works Director Randy Hill, Parks and Recreation Director Rich Klimes, Fire Chief Jerry Ewers, and Planning, Zoning and Building Safety Director Steve Boka.

The first item on the agenda was the second reading of the gas franchise ordinance which includes the establishment of a utility franchise fee.

#21003. Councilmember Roby moved to approve the second reading of the ordinance. Seconded by Councilmember Fitzgerald.

There was discussion concerning the proposed ordinance. City staff and the City Attorney have not been able to determine to date whether private suppliers of gas are subject to franchise fees as utilities are. Research will continue, but has no bearing on the ordinance before the Council tonight as it relates solely to Alliant as a gas utility. The \$180,000 budgeted for the FY 2010/2011 budget is based on estimates from Alliant Energy.

Vote – Five ayes: Councilmembers Fitzgerald, Natvig, Shihadeh, Roby, and Lange. Two nays: Councilmembers LeRette and Bynum. Motion carried and ordinance approved on second reading.

The second item on the agenda was a resolution fixing the date for the sale of general obligation corporate purpose bonds and approving the official statement for the bonds.

#21004. Councilmember Bynum moved the resolution be adopted. Seconded by Councilmember Lange. All ayes: Councilmembers LeRette, Fitzgerald, Natvig, Shihadeh, Bynum, Roby, and Lange. Motion carried and resolution duly adopted.

The third item on the agenda was a request to authorize the city's financial consultant to use the Parity Electronic Bid System for the receipt of bids.

#21005. Councilmember Roby moved the request be approved. Seconded by Councilmember Fitzgerald.

Councilmember Bynum asked about the system and was told bidders can submit bids electronically that are then held until closing and then released at the same time and simultaneously evaluated.

Vote – All ayes; motion carried.

The fourth action item on the agenda was a request to allow Piper Jaffray to participate in the competitive sale of the city's general obligation bond issue by submitting bids for the bonds.

#21006. Councilmember Lange moved the request be approved. Seconded by Councilmember Natvig. All ayes; motion carried.

The next item on the agenda was a presentation by Terry Martin, Robert Cook and Rodd McNeal representing the Louisa-Muscatine Drainage District. They were present to voice their concerns about the Muscatine slough's discharge into the drainage district. Terry Martin stated the water is channeled into their closed system and it can take two to three days to drain the slough. Additionally, the district's costs are rising and they are asking the City to provide payment based on the amount of water discharged from the slough. The drainage district is willing to meter the discharge point.

City Administrator Gregg Mandsager stated that Council had on their desks two maps showing the Muscatine Slough. Mandsager also noted that the additional water that would be entering the slough amounted to .3% of the total water entering the drainage district.

Public Works Director Randy Hill stated that the district's attorney, Scott Power, had met with Stanley Consultants concerning this matter.

Jack Fink, representing Stanley Consultants, stated the Hershey Avenue project is being done in two phases with the first phase essentially done and no water being added to the slough at this time. He stated the second phase involves the north side of Hershey Avenue and it just got underway. He stated the rate will not change at the pumps; however, it will take longer to drain the slough. Dredging the slough will only increase storage and will not affect the rate of discharge.

The drainage district indicated that they had been paid at least once in the past and city staff will follow up to determine if so and how much. The City has not been paying the district annually. According to the drainage district, it takes approximately 3 days to drain the district with a large rain event. The City will take the District's request under advisement.

The next item on the agenda was a review of fees for Parks and Recreation, the Fire Department (confined spaces/ambulance charges), and Planning, Zoning and Building Safety.

City Administrator Mandsager stated these items were raised during the recent budget review sessions and revenue associated with each item was included in the adopted budget.

Parks and Recreation Director Rich Klimes, speaking in reference to the Columbarium Niches at Greenwood Cemetery, stated the columbarium has 104 niches with seven being sold to date. He stated that staff is proposing to lower the niche fees which, as shown on the survey included in the agenda packet, would place the city at the lower end of the niche fees but not at the overall lowest.

There were comments from Council concerning perpetual care and giving a percentage of the sales to the retail sales office.

The next fee discussion involved confined space rescue by the Muscatine Fire Department and ambulance service fees. Council was informed that communities are allowed to charge for the confined space services. In addition, the city has received word from Wellmark advising they will be changing their maximum allowable fee effective July 1, 2010. This increase affects the city's billing and payments associated with specific types of emergency calls. The Fire Department is requesting the ambulance fee schedule be changed in accordance with Wellmark's new maximum allowable fee.

The final fee review involved the Planning, Zoning and Building Safety Department. Steve Boka outlined the reasoning behind his request for fee increases for the various activities that take place in this department.

There was discussion concerning each of these items with general agreement to bring back each item for action at the next regular meeting.

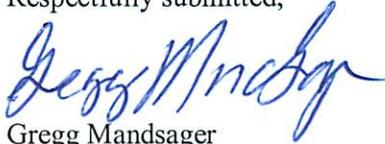
The final item on the agenda was a review of the city's snow ordinance and snow routes.

Public Works Director Randy Hill outlined the review staff has gone through in proposing these changes to the city ordinance. The ordinance as proposed will address snow removal and its placement on city streets and the public right-of-way. This has been a recurring complaint each winter season from both the public and city staff in their efforts to maintain clear and safe city streets. The police department will be the enforcement agency with public works support in identifying offenders. It was the City Council's consensus to move forward if this was an ordinance that we were able and going to enforce. Placing of snow on adjacent private property is not addressed in the ordinance, but may be an issue to bring back for consideration.

Public Works Director Randy Hill reiterated the street closure information related to Mississippi Drive and the Carver Corner as noted at the April 1st City Council meeting.

Under the comment portion of the agenda, City Council member LaRette noted recent youth activities and accomplishments of the Little Muskies at a recent state competition and local youth figure skaters that participated in a recent show in Illinois.

Respectfully submitted,



Gregg Mandsager
City Administrator