

Mayor Charles "Skip" Lee called a meeting of the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 pm on Monday, September 19, 2011. Roll call. Present: Aldermen Barry Cox, Retha Elston, Linda Marley, Joe Martin, Lou Sotelo, and Amy Viering. Absent: None.

Also present were City Attorney Ron Coplan, Code Enforcement Officer Amanda Schmidt, Director of Financial Services Cindy Von Holten, Interim Fire Chief Gary Cook, Police Chief Ron Potthoff, and City Clerk Marie Rombouts.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Joan Sage with Comcast distributed information to the Council regarding a new program. Comcast is offering internet essentials for \$9.99 to students (K-12) who are eligible for the free lunch program at school. Participants cannot currently have Comcast internet service. Internet service can continue as long as a student is in school and qualifies each year for the free lunch program. This service will also enable parents to have internet access. If a computer is not available, these families also have the option to purchase a small laptop computer for \$149. Internet safety training is available on-line and in print, with face-to-face classes beginning soon.

Alderman Cox made a motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda, as follows:

- 1) City Council Minutes of September 6, 2011
- 2) Bills and Payroll totaling \$633,510.91
- 3) Plan Commission Minutes of August 28, 2011
- 4) Petition from Christ Lutheran School to hold a 5K race on Saturday, November 19, at 8:30 am
- 5) Petition to allow Newman High School to hold their annual Homecoming Parade on Friday, September 23 at 2:00 pm

The motion was seconded by Alderman Elston. Voting: Ayes – All. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve appointments and reappointments to the Boards and Commissions as recommended by Mayor Lee:

- Amy Viering as City Council voting member to the Sterling Industrial Development Commission for a 3 year term
- Dick Cox to the Sterling Mural Commission for a 3 year term
- Dick Card to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a 5 year term
- Tim McCaslin reappointed to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a 5 year term

The motion was seconded by Alderman Martin. Voting: Ayes – All. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Viering made a motion to approve the employment contract for Band Director Jon James for the upcoming concert season; seconded by Alderman Sotelo. Voting: Ayes – All. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring October 5, 2011, as Stock our Local Food Pantries Day in Sterling, Illinois; seconded by Alderman Viering. Mayor Lee read the proclamation into the record and presented the proclamation to Andy Edmondson from Newman High School. Voting: Ayes – All. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Cox made a motion to pass the proclamation congratulating the Sterling All Stars 11-12 year old Girls Softball Little League team for claiming the World Championship title on August 17, 2011; seconded by Alderman Sotelo. Voting: Ayes – All. Nays – None. Motion carried. Alderman Cox read the proclamation into the record. Mayor Lee presented team members with certificates of achievement: Emily Berogan, Kylie Burkett, Hannah Escamilla, Abri Hale, Cheyenne Harrington, Shannon Long, Mya Pearson, Kylie Powers, Lexy Staples, Erin Stroup, Nadia Trujillo, and coaches Eric Staples (manager), Ed Long, and Pete Trujillo.

Mike Mudge with Rock River Energy was present to field questions from the Council on municipal aggregation. Since Mudge last presented this plan to the Council, he reported results have been better than expected. Savings are close to 20% for the average residential customer. To move forward, the Council needs to pass an ordinance, get the question on the ballot, and let the voters decide. If approved, Mudge would prepare the documents for bidding to electricity suppliers. Mudge explained it is his desire to maximize the lowest rate for customers. The following questions were presented:

- Is Rock River Energy the only company providing aggregation?
- If repairs are necessary, is the citizen responsible for the cost of repairs? Those costs are usually absorbed by the supplier.
- Is there a minimum term required to get better rates? Variable, depending on the agreement.
- Can residents opt out of the City's choice for electricity supplier? Yes, there are no obligations.
- Are there early termination fees?
- Is there a minimum usage expected by an electricity supplier? No, there is not a minimum requirement.
- What are charges from Commonwealth Edison to provide billing? None. If there are any, Rock River Energy would absorb those fees.

Mudge explained there are lots of bidders, quality suppliers, and good rates. He uses 12 criteria to select electricity suppliers.

Mayor Lee stated that when something seems too good to be true, it usually is. It is difficult to grasp that there are no hidden clauses. Mike Mudge reminded the Council that the next step is the ordinance. Mudge will see that Manager Shumard gets a copy of the sample ordinance.

Alderman Martin made a motion to approve **Ordinance #2011-09-16 Amending the Sign Code**; seconded by Alderman Elston. Voting: Ayes – All. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Marley made a motion to approve Partial Pay Request #3 for the 2011 Street Project Contract #3 to Twin City Construction in the amount of \$82,685.79; seconded by Alderman Martin. Voting: Ayes – All. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Chief Potthoff reported the 2011 Dodge Charger squad car was debuted in the Fiesta parade and received many good remarks. The car was the City's first place prize in the Traffic Safety Challenge from the State.

Alderman Viering expressed appreciation for the opportunity to attend the Illinois Municipal League.

Alderman Sotelo thanked the Police Department for their work over the weekend on the Fiesta parade and the soccer tournament.

Mayor Lee was thankful for his opportunity to attend the Illinois Municipal League. He stated that he was able to attend a session on Liquor Commissions, which was helpful with his new-found position as Liquor Commissioner. Mayor Lee also remarked about the great experience he had attending the BLIND (Building Lasting Impressions that Never Die) retreat with high school students from Rock Falls, Sterling and Newman.

Alderman Marley stated that she enjoyed attending the IML conference and learned many things, some positive and some negative.

With no further business to discuss, meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.

Marie Rombouts
City Clerk