

Mayor Charles "Skip" Lee called the study session to order at 6:30 pm on Monday, January 9, 2012. Roll call. Present: Aldermen Barry Cox, Retha Elston, Linda Marley, Joe Martin, Lou Sotelo, and Amy Viering.

Also present were City Manager Scott Shumard, City Management Intern Hadley Skeffington-Vos, Susan Hand, Director of Financial Services Cindy Von Holten, Rachel Adams, Building and Zoning Services Coordinator Mike Wolber, Code Enforcement Officers Amanda Schmidt and Brad Alexander, Special Projects Coordinator Vern Gottel, Police Chief Ron Potthoff, Police Lt. Tim Morgan, and City Clerk Marie Rombouts.

Troy Stinson from Strand Associates reported on the EPA permit that is renewable every five years. There have been a couple major changes. One change, to eliminate lagoon outfall, can be done with minimal complications or funds. The other change, to eliminate discharges from emergency high level bypass, is more significant. At least 20 other communities are trying to get this requirement out of their permit but it is a USEPA requirement and Stinson is unsure if it will be removed. The alternative is to demonstrate that no feasible alternative exists.

Andy Craven with Strand Associates reported an infiltration and inflow study was conducted between 2003 and 2004 in the northeast section of Sterling. Craven pointed out that over 50% of the sewer infrastructure is privately owned. An effective way to bring it up to code is at point of sale. Wolber stated that inspections are conducted at the time of sale and a letter is placed on file. Craven noted that removal of infiltration and inflow will be most cost effective, but more needs to be done.

Manager Shumard reminded Council of the proposal for storm water utility billing and asked for their support as staff works with property owners in redirecting storm water from the sanitary sewer system.

Michael Ryan with Leo A Daly presented the updated floor plan designs for the Coliseum remodeling project. Geo-thermal heating will replace all existing heating. Lighting will be all new because of the cost to replace existing fixtures with new energy efficient fixtures. A generator has been added for critical power situations. Ryan set out the time schedule. Advertisement for bids will go out on January 23. A mandatory pre-bid meeting will be held at the Coliseum on February 6. Bids will be due March 5. Following contract negotiations, the bid award should be presented at the April 2 Council meeting, with construction beginning April 16. Construction should be completed in 13 months. Alderman Cox wanted assurance that the estimate was not above our original estimate. Manager Shumard explained the items that were added reduced the contingency funding. Gottel felt that Leo A Daly had been thorough and

does not foresee many contingencies. Ryan feels that 7% is an ample amount for contingencies.

Cindy Von Holten presented a couple questions before proceeding with the utility billing for sanitary sewer and garbage. Von Holten reported that approximately \$38,000 was written off last year. Von Holten suggested that we bill property owners instead of tenants to minimize these losses and slow down the turnover of billings, especially for rental properties. Alderman Cox stated the billing of property owners would help ensure payments would be made. Other Council members agreed. Von Holten's second concern is the summer sewer rate, because it provides very little relief for sewer usage. Council members did not see any reason to offer summer sewer rates.

Cindy Von Holten reported Illinois American Water Company would shut off water service for the City because of non-payment of their sewer/garbage bill. The Water Company would charge \$65.00 to cover their cost of terminating and restoring water service. Additional charges would be incurred if the service remains off. Alderman Cox does not feel that shutting off water would benefit the City because these fees could cost more than the bill we are trying to collect and may not be recuperated.

Manager Shumard reported on the administrative hearing process. The City needs a heavy hand to deal with condemnation and eviction. It is the last option. Daily citations can be issued. Unless we can negotiate, prosecution is inevitable. Fines whether paid or not, will take the property owner to the Circuit Court.

Without seeing the interior of a structure, Code Enforcement needs to show cause to get an administrative warrant to inspect the interior. If the structure is proven unsafe to for habitation, it can be condemned.

Manager Shumard asked the Council if they would back up Code Enforcement staff if they started pushing and citizens become irritated. Mike Wolber stated the ultimate goal is compliance with the codes. The Council agreed to support Code Enforcement staff and pursue code violations.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.

Marie Rombouts  
City Clerk