

Mayor Lee called the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 pm on Monday February 6, 2023. Roll call. Present: Mayor Lee, Aldermen Retha Elston, Christine Wilen, Josh Johnson, Kaitlyn Ekquist and Jim Wise. Absent: Joseph Martin.

Also attending were City Attorney Tim Zollinger, City Manager Scott Shumard, Finance Director Cindy Von Holten, Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt, Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader, Police Chief Alex Chavira, Fire Chief Michael Dettman, Superintendent of Wastewater Cory Bradshaw (Zoom), and City Clerk Teri Sathoff.

The Pledge of allegiance was recited.

Tom Brackemeyer, 1512 5th Ave Sterling, addressed the council with concerns about crosswalks and bicycle lanes in the City of Sterling not being properly marked. He would like to have all crosswalks marked for pedestrian safety.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- A. Approval of Minutes
- B. Approval of Bills and Payroll
- C. Resolution No. 2023-02-01 Authorizing Letter of Non-objection to Whiteside County Relating to Subdivision Platt Approval on Holly Road
- D. Resolution No. 2023-02-02 Authorizing Letter of Non-objection to Whiteside County Relating to Subdivision Platt Approval (Koster)
- E. Resolution R2023-02-03 to Close Second Street and turn lane for Main Street Car Show
- F. Pay Request (Final) to CEC for Central Park Lighting in the amount of \$91,301.85
- G. Resolution No. R2023-02-04 Transferring Jurisdiction and Control of Real Property to the Industrial Development Commission
- H. Pay Request #2 to Hoerr in the amount of \$51,171.36

Motion seconded by Alderman Wilen. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist, and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve Ordinance No 2023-02-03 Expand and Change Special Use at 409 Avenue L and 1204 West 4th Street; Seconded by Alderman Wise. Alderman Wise thanked Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt for her work in getting this property occupied. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist, and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Ekquist made a motion to approve an agreement with SB Friedman for a Qualification Study for a Business Development District; Seconded by Alderman Johnson. Alderman Elston asked if there would be an issue obtaining a business district since the mall is currently occupied

with businesses. City Manager Shumard stated that should not affect this, the requirement for the business district is a need for economic enhancement. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist, and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Ekquist made a motion to approve an agreement for reimbursement for costs associated with a Qualification Study for a Business Development District; Seconded by Alderman Johnson. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist, and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Elston made a motion to award the bid to Nicam Construction for Public Works Building Addition Phase 2 in the amount of \$1,512,000.00; Seconded by Alderman Wise. Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader stated Public Works currently has equipment stored in several locations off site as well as outside. This addition will allow for everything to be stored inside in one place. Alderman Elston requested clarification on the location of the addition, it will be on the west side of the large building. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist, and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Ekquist made a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-02-04 Approving a Non-Conforming Sign at Highland Developments (Former Kmart Plaza) if Acceptable; Seconded by Alderman Johnson. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist, and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Chief Alex Chavira congratulated Detective Sergeant Maggie Ellmaker, she was chosen to be a speaker at the 2023 Women in Criminal Justice Conference in Peoria, IL. This is quite an accomplishment, she was selected out of a large group of women. Chief Chavira stated he is very proud of her and asks that everyone congratulate her when they see her.

Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader thanked the Council for supporting the addition.

City Clerk Sathoff reported the next City Council meeting will be on Tuesday February 21st, as Monday February 20th is a holiday. She also advised the Statement of Economic Interest sheets have been mailed out, please fill them out and turn them in as soon as possible.

Alderman Elston thanked Public Works for snow removal. She congratulated Janna Groharing, Channel 13 news did a story on the downtown Plaza shops. Elston thanked everyone for their support with her husband, Andy, after his surgery.

Mayor Lee commended the police department, fire department, CGH EMS as well as the public works department. There was an auto accident in the area of his home on Avenue G, it was great to see all of departments work together to accomplish the same goal. Mayor Lee stated we are fortunate to have quality people employed with the City.

At 6:57 Mayor Lee turned the meeting over to Ron Clewer with Gorman and Associates and Gary Anderson with Studio GWA to present the proposed Master Plan for the riverfront. Ron stated it was nice that the City of Sterling had very good response from the public with the walk through of the National property. Gorman and Company's master plan includes the following summary of projects and priorities:

Projects

1. Lawrence Brothers – workforce apartments, hotel, event center and bar/restaurant.
2. National – Market rate apartments, fitness center and other potential uses.

Priorities

1. The promotion of both the Lawrence and National projects as business development sites.
2. Focus on environmental remediation for both Lawrence and National sites.
3. Partial listing of the sites on the National Register of historic places.

Mr. Clewer stated if we are unable to achieve the quiet zone for the railroad, he is not concerned, there are ways to deal with this. One of the most important parts of this is to appease the historic tax credit investors. Clewer and City Manager Shumard are currently looking into the engineering for the underpass for the railway.

Mayor Lee thanked Mr. Clewer for the attention to detail and the focus on implications of the cost of the projects. There is a great balance between what can be on the riverfront with the reality of what can be achieved.

At 7:41 Mayor Lee turned the meeting over to City Manager Shumard to discuss a sewer lateral maintenance program. Shumard stated the City owns all the sewer mains, the lines from the house to the sewer main are the responsibility of the homeowner if there is an issue. In the last five years there were 201 sewer permits pulled, the average repair was \$3,000 with the highest repair running \$13,900. There are third party companies that will supply insurance for these repairs, these programs sound great in theory however, there are a lot of things the homeowner must do to qualify for repayment of a repair. Shumard is looking into the possibility of offering a program created by the City. There would be a separate fund established where the City would collect the fee and repairs would be reimbursed out of this fund. By doing this we could eliminate outside companies being involved, these companies sometimes require plumbers from outside the area to make the repairs.

Shumard asked the Council if they are interested in having him pursue the possibility of creating a low-cost City reimbursement program. Alderman Wilen stated she had a third-party sewer

service line company and when she had issues with her line she was made to jump through several hoops, they required her to use one of three approved plumbers in the State. Alderman Johnson stated he liked the idea of having a program that allows citizens to pay a head if there is an issue and also to have a repayment program. Alderman Elston agreed with the idea of the program, the houses in the City are getting older and the chances of an issue are increasing. Alderman Ekquist stated she was concerned about the program not being profitable for the City. She was concerned that residents could sign up as soon as they have an issue and then discontinue the program. She is concerned the City will lose money on the program. Alderman Wise requested City Manager Shumard to provide a model program to the Council. Mayor Lee advised City Manager Shumard to look further into the program.

At 7:55 Mayor Lee turned the meeting over to City Manager Shumard to for the budget study session.

City manager Shumard reviewed the following funds:

- Northwestern Steel and Wire Redevelopment – The balance of this fund will be \$0 as of April 2023. This fund will be closed out, the cell tower rent that will be received will be put in the general fund.
- Lincolnway/Lynn TIF – This fund was created in 2010, it is an in and out fund. The funds come in from the sales tax and property tax and the money goes right back out to the bond payment and to the developer for reimbursements.
- Rock River TIF – The bond was retired at the end of last year, the final payment was paid out in December. The trustee can be eliminated for this TIF.
- CBD East TIF – This is a pay as you go TIF, the fund balance is \$29,104.
- Lincoln Highway TIF – This TIF was established in 2021 to address the former K-Mart Plaza area. This is a pay as you go TIF. The City will recover past and ongoing fees, the developer will get the remaining money.
- CGH Bond Fund 2012 – This is an in and out fund for the repayment of refinancing a bond for CGH. This will be closed out this year, as the bond has been paid off.
- CGH Bond Fund 2021A – This is an in and out fund for the repayment of refinancing a bond for CGH. This is was issued for the purpose of funding a portion of the unfunded IMRF pension liability for CGH Medical Center.

- CGH Bond Fund 2021B – This is an in and out fund for the repayment of refinancing a bond for CGH. This is was issued for the purpose of financing capital projects at CGH Medical Center.
- Special Services Area Fund – This fund consists of Greenridge and Tori Pines. Due to sub-standard roads installed by the developer, Tori Pines has agreed to pay an additional assessment that was escrowed with the city. The projected balance on 4/30/2023 is \$0. This fund will be closed out this year.
- Trust Committee Fund – This fund has a balance of \$1,200 for future Veteran’s Park, possibly on the riverfront.
- Strong Communities Grant - Sterling was awarded \$246,400 in IHDA grant funds, the last of the money will be spent in March and the grant will be closed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.

Teri Sathoff

City Clerk