

Mayor Lee called the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 pm on Tuesday March 7, 2022. Roll call. Present: Mayor Lee, Aldermen Retha Elston, Josh Johnson, Joe Martin, Christine Wilen, Kaitlyn Ekquist and Jim Wise. Absent: None.

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 and City Clerk Teri Sathoff.

The Pledge of allegiance was recited.

Executive Director of the Sauk Valley Area Chamber, Kris Noble, presented information on a six question survey the Chamber, Keystone Group and the Sauk Valley Community College conducted in the fall of 2021. Noble stated that the survey received 1,074 responses.

Question one rated the importance of committing funds, resources and action to the riverfront. 84% rated this either important or very important.

Question two asked which component of the riverfront was the most important, Lawrence Brothers building, Stanley National or the riverfront park. 62% selected Lawrence Brothers followed by Stanley National with 22% and the riverfront park with 16%.

Question three asked for potential amenities for these properties, responses includes items such as, restaurants, hotel, housing, retail, parks family amenities and access to the river.

Question four asked for amenities for the riverfront park to be ranked in order of importance. Water spray pad, ice skating ribbon, and Riverwalk trail were among the top responses.

Question five asked for additional amenity ideas not previously listed. Responses included pool, kayaking, fishing, paddleboats, museum, restaurants, trees, rock climbing, trampoline park, miniature golf, pet area and green space.

Question six asked for suggestions for organizations, businesses and individuals that should be asked to make a commitment to the riverfront. Responses included CGH, Halo, Wahl, SVCC, United Way, Kiwanis, Optimist, Rotary and local churches.

Mayor Lee thanked Kris Noble and Joe Bright for the work that was put into the survey and the responses that were received will be forwarded to the riverfront committee.

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 R2022-03-04 to Close Second St. and turn lane for Main Street Car Show.
- D. Pay Request #5 for former National Training Building Demolition Renovation to Gehrke Construction in the amount of \$33,669.00.

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

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve the proposal from Winter Construction for the emergency Coliseum ceiling repairs; seconded by Alderman Martin. Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt said this was an emergency repair and that the demo will be done this week, a drop ceiling will be put in to allow for easy access. Schmidt stated that the lobby ceiling appears to be more structurally sound, they will have a better idea about the lobby in the near future. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Ekquist made a motion to approve Ordinance 2022-03-09 Amending Provisions of the Liquor Code to Create a New Category of License Permitting Operation of an Axe Throwing Business; Seconded by Alderman Johnson. Mayor Lee stated that safety and insurance was discussed with the business owner at the liquor commission meeting. Alderman Wise thanked the Liquor Commission for doing their due diligence. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Johnson made a motion to approve waiving the bid process and Accept Low Quote from MOST Plumbing and Mechanical for Plumbing and HVAC Services to Central Park Concession and Restroom Facility in the amount of \$93,000; seconded by Alderman Wise. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2022-03-10 Amending Chapter 6, Article II, Section 41, to Increase the Number of Available Liquor Licenses from 34 to 38; seconded by Alderman Johnson. Alderman Wise requested the Liquor Commission and the City Council look at future requests to see if the applicant provides any economic value to the City prior to approval. Wise stated that a City the size of Sterling has enough gaming establishments. Mayor Lee stated that he agrees with Alderman Wise, licenses are approved based on the business plan presented. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Ekquist made a motion to approve Ordinance 2022-03-11 Amending Chapter 102, Zoning Code to provide for Retail Incubators in the Downtown Business Zoning District and Permit Light Industrial Uses as a Special Use in the RB Zoning; seconded by Alderman Elston. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Abstained – Johnson (Johnson abstained from the vote due to the work on the incubators possibly being constructed by WACC). Motion carried.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve Ordinance 2022-03-08 Amending Chapter 22, Article VI Rescinding and Replacing Code Provisions Relating to Massage Establishments, to be Defined as Body Work Establishments; seconded by Alderman Martin. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader reported to the City Council that the cannon at Flock park has damage to the wheels and the cannon itself. Schrader received a rough repair estimate from Tim Kendrick, for \$4,000 per wheel. Schrader asked the Council how the City would like to proceed with repairs. The cannon can be restored to original at a higher expense. The cheaper alternative would be to fabricate the wheels out of steel and the cannon could be powdered coated. Alderman Johnson stated that since the spokes on the wheels are not original that the less expensive route seemed appropriate.

City Manager Shumard advised the Council that he contacted the sign companies that submitted drawings for the sign that is to be placed at West 3rd Street and Avenue G. One of the vendors stated that they were going to retire so they submitted our request to another company, "vendor 1". Alderman Ekquist, Johnson, Wilen, Elston and Martin all agreed that the newest submission was the most esthetically pleasing. The Alderman appreciated the use of the City font, the Steel letters, lighting, colors and stone work. Alderman Wise would like for "vendor 2" to be selected because they have over 35 years of experience and they have direct access to the mural restoration services. Alderman Ekquist stated that she would like to choose based on esthetics as opposed to choosing on a potential future connection. Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt stated that her history of working with sign companies the hardest part of constructing a new sign is the design process and the concept. The installation and fabrication is not the difficult part. Schmidt stated that it is obvious that "vendor 1" designed the sign with effort, they used City colors and font.

Alderman Wise would like the City Manager to invite both companies to attend a meeting and have them provide a background of their business.

City Manager Shumard introduced Ron Clewer with Gorman and Company. The City is seeking to engage Gorman & Company as the master developer for the riverfront area, which is comprised of the former "Lawrence Brothers Hardware Complex," former "Stanley-National Complex" and a portion of the "Former Northwestern Steel & Wire" plant.

Under the proposed agreement, Gorman's tasks include development, planning and design services to prepare a master development plan. Within 60 days after the agreement has been executed by Gorman and the City, Gorman is expected to deliver to the City a proposed budget for all costs and expenses to be incurred by Gorman in connection with the preparation of the Master Plan. Within 180 days of agreeing on a budget, Gorman is expected to deliver to the City a proposed Master Plan. The Master Plan will set forth the proposed development of the Project including the proposed Phases. The City will then have 60 days after its receipt of the Master Plan to notify Gorman whether it approves the Master Plan. If the City does not approve the Master Plan, then Gorman and the City are expected to work cooperatively in good faith to agree on modifications to the Master Plan.

Mayor Lee asked Mr. Clewer if there would be a timeline of events. Clewer stated that they will begin soliciting for businesses as soon as the development plan has been agreed upon.

Alderman Martin inquired if there will be assistance with remediation grants and funding sources. Clewer stated that yes that is part of their process.

Mayor Lee asked if stakeholder input would be accepted. Clewer stated that yes, their Company will build on the work that has already been done.

Mr. Clewer stated that he is looking to have a long, open and honest relationship with the City of Sterling.

Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt advised the Council that yard waste pick up will resume on April 1st.

City Manager Shumard advised the City Council on the following items;

- The bid opening for Route 40 will be on Friday March 11th. DOT has 45 days to award the bid. They have the north bound lane scheduled to be closed for 60 days.
- The Roof on the Grandon band shell sustained damage, the Band Commission will be submitting a quote for repairs from Sterling Commercial Roofing.

- The work on Avenue D will start soon.
- Work at the National Training building was scheduled to resume today.
- Surf Broadband will be holding preconstruction meetings this week, work is scheduled to start in May if not sooner.
- The Strategic planning is scheduled to for March 14th at 4:30pm. Homework will be sent out prior to the meeting.
- Mark Geil and Terry Maguire have agreed to be co-chairs for the Riverfront Committee. The list of committee members will be on the next agenda for approval.

Alderman Martin wished Alderman Ekquist a happy birthday and congratulated Alderman Wilen and her husband on their 50th wedding anniversary.

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The meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm to the budget study session.

City manager Shumard reviewed the following funds:

- Storm Water – There are not a lot of projects planned for this year, the 2nd Avenue will have the storm sewer replaced in the area of CGH. The detention pond in the Meadowlands needs to be dredged, this may be an ARPA project. With the bond in place, the engineering for Tori Pines, Griswold, Woodburn and North Street can be done.
- Library – Amended revenues are up thanks to a donation. The elevator will need to be upgraded. The increase in minimum wage has increased has caused a significant increase in wages.
- 2022A Bonds – This is an in and out fund. The revenues will come from property tax levies. The interest on this fund was 2.98%.

- 2022B Bonds – This is also an in and out fund. Funds come from the local options sales tax as well as storm water fund. The interest on this fund was 2.43%.
- Sewer – We continue to set aside money for future plant replacement. Willett Hoffman is currently conducting a facility plan; this plan should be completed in the fall of this year.

Sewer rate changes are proposed for FY 22-23, the base rate would increase to \$15.00 (.50 cent increase) and \$4.25 per 100 cubic feet (.15 cent increase). This would be an average increase of \$.50. In 2019 the regional average was \$45.56; this rate increase will still keep us well below the 2019 regional average.

- Health Insurance – From 2017 to 2021 the expenses decreased, we were able to build up a large fund balance and the employees were given a rebate. This year we are projecting to have approximately \$2 million in claims. We will be able to freeze the premiums for another year.

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 pm.

Teri Sathoff

City Clerk