

Mayor Charles L. "Skip" Lee called a virtual meeting of the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 pm on Monday, March 15, 2021. Roll call. Present: Aldermen Retha Elston, Josh Johnson, Joe Martin, John Stauter, Christine Wilen, 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, Deputy Fire Chief Michael Dettman and City Clerk Teri Sathoff.

Mayor Lee, Police Chief Chavira, Alderman Johnson, and City Clerk Sathoff were present in the council chambers, everyone else attended via Zoom. The meeting was recorded and will be kept on the city hard drive. All members in attendance could hear the other members in attendance.

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. Request to waive fees from Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce to hold their member social at Sterling Marketplace on May 27, 2021.

Motion seconded by Alderman Martin. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Stauter, Martin, Wilen and Wise. Nays – None. Alderman Johnson abstained from the vote. Motion carried.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2021-03-04 Amending Pay Plan for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 to include a one-time payment of \$1600 to all nonunion employees compensating for back pay, excluding the Sterling Public Works Department employees but to include the Superintendent of Public Works, Brad Schrader, and Administrative Assistant Melanie Farmer; seconded by Alderman Johnson. Alderman Wise questioned if this should include Public Works employees since they were nonunion employees. City Attorney Zollinger confirmed that a wage change cannot be implemented without first negotiating it with the union. This does not prevent the Public Works employees from getting this however it will have to be negotiated. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Johnson, Martin, Stauter, Wilen and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Elston made a motion to award the contract to demolish 1110 7th Avenue to Stichter Construction, Inc., of Erie, Illinois, in the amount of \$9,875.00; seconded by

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

Alderman Wise made a motion to award the contract to demolish the detached, accessory garage at 405 16th Avenue to Burke Excavating, Inc., of Tampico, Illinois, in the amount of \$2,915.00; seconded by Alderman Martin. Alderman Elston questioned if there was asbestos in the garage and if that would be mitigated prior to being demolished. Superintendent of Building and Zoning, Amanda Schmidt stated that testing for asbestos will be done as it is a required by the Strong Communities Grant. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Johnson, Martin, Stauter, Wilen and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Wise made a motion to award the contract for concrete for City curb and sidewalks to the low bidder Rock River Ready Mix; seconded by Alderman Stauter. Mayor Lee asked Superintendent of Public Works, Brad Schrader how the prices compared to last year. Schrader stated there was a small increase. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Johnson, Martin, Stauter, Wilen and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Wise made a motion to approve the Motor Fuel Tax general maintenance bid received from Helm Materials of Freeport, IL 61032; seconded by Alderman Johnson. Superintendent of Public Works, Brad Schrader stated that this is for the material used for constructing roads and there was also a small increase in these materials. Mayor Lee questioned why there was only one bid, Schrader stated that in the past there are usually two bidders and he was uncertain why we received only the one bid. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Johnson, Martin, Stauter, Wilen and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Johnson made a motion to set the Public Hearing for Budget at the 6:30 pm meeting on Monday, April 5, 2021; seconded by Alderman Elston. The proposed budget will be on display at the Sterling Public Library and the Sterling Coliseum on March 26, 2021. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Johnson, Martin, Stauter, Wilen and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Mayor Lee commended Deputy Chief Mike Dettman and the members of Sterling Fire Department and the responding agencies for their response to the high-rise fire in Rock Falls.

Deputy Chief Mike Dettman thanked Lieutenant Garrett Ramos, firefighters Alex Vlakancic, Kurt Landis, Clark Liedberg, Nick Hammer, Cory Bianchi, and Josh Koehler. These firefighters made several successful rescues with the aerial. Dettman also thanked the area departments that responded. Dettman credited being a member of M.A.B.A.S (Mutual Aid Box Alarm System) for receiving aid from the area departments in a timely manner.

Attorney Zollinger noted that the current Attorney General is strict in his interpretation of the Open Meetings Act. Attorney Zollinger reminded everyone to be mindful of that.

Mayor Lee reported that the City Clerk's office has streamlined the process for business license and made it more efficient. Mayor Lee commended Monique Castillo and City Clerk Teri Sathoff for the work they have done.

Mayor Lee stated that there are issues with the Fire Department's aerial truck, Deputy Chief Dettman has investigated replacing this with a used truck. Mayor Lee questioned when yard waste will begin being picked up. Yard waste pickup starts April 1st. Mayor Lee also stated there has been an issue in the downtown area with pet owners not picking up after their pets, he would like to remind pet owners to pick up after their pets.

City Clerk Sathoff reported that the new City website will be going live next week, and the employees will be looking at it this week and checking it for accuracy.

Meeting adjourned to a budget study session at 7:10 pm.

City Manager Shumard reviewed the following funds:

General Fund

Revenues

- EAV – This is the 3rd in a row that the EAV has showed growth.
- Sales Tax – sales tax is up, it was expected to decline because of COVID. Budgeted a 2.9% increase for next year.
- Other Sales Tax – This is comprised of video gaming, use taxes and shared cannabis taxis up 1.9%, budgeted for a 7.9% growth.
- Franchise licenses – This has been declining since 2013. We have budgeted a decrease of 6.4%. The rapid decrease has leveled off.
- Income Tax – This is budgeted from the IML and their estimates are frequently inaccurate. Amending down 8.2% and budgeting for a decrease of 8%.
- State Replacement Tax – The City relies on the IML for this as well, amending down 32.2% and budgeting for a 25.4% decrease.

Expenses Non-Departmental

- Health Insurance – This was a good year for claims, budgeting for no change.
- Legal Services – Increase costs are foreseen due to new Public Works contract as well as the Police and Fire contracts.
- General Insurance and Deductibles – This is budgeted for a 10% increase to be safe.
- There is an increase of 3.2% for the non-departmental expenses for FY 21-22.

Plan Commission

- Amended budget is 91.2% over due to comprehensive plan and continued annexations. Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt stated the Comp Plan is almost done. The comp plan does call for community input and that has been an issue with COVID-19.
- For FY 21-22 residential annexations will be complete however commercial and industrial annexations will be discussed. The Comprehensive plan will be completed.

Fire/Police Commission

- No changes.

General Fund Mayor and Council

- There was no travel or training however new equipment was ordered for remote meetings. There is a budget increase of 1.6% for FY 21-22.
- Mayor Lee would like to see each Alderman receive a small amount of money to for the members of their ward to make their ward a better place.

City Clerk

- Amended budget is 3.5% over due training for new City Clerk, and a new postage machine. There is a budget decrease of 6.2% for FY 21-22.

Administration

- Amended budget is 2.92% under due to wages for the administrative assistant over estimated in the transition from part time to full time, as well as canceled training. There is a budget decrease of 0.4% for FY 21-22.
- Mayor Lee asked the council their opinion about including the City Manager in the pay increase for all of the employees. All Alderman agreed that City Manager

Shumard should be included with the rest of the employees in the wage adjustment.

Information Technology

- Amended budget is down 0.2%, there is a budget increase of 13.8% for FY 21-22.

Fire Administration

- Amended budget is 2.92% under due to wages for the administrative assistant over estimated in the transition from part time to full time, as well as canceled training. There is a budget decrease of 0.4% for FY 21-22.
- Mayor Lee asked the City Manager about compensating Chief Dettman for filling in for the Chief's position. City Manager Shumard stated that he has discussed a stipend with the Finance Director Cindy Von Holten.

Fire Services

- Amended budget is 16.1%. The overtime was up 124% due to prolonged medical absences and COVID, there is a budget increase of 12.5% for FY 21-22.

Fire Prevention

- Amended budget has a decrease of 0.5%. There is a budget increase of 3.6% for FY 21-22.

Police Administration

- Amended budget has a decrease of 1.1%. There is a budget increase of 5% for FY 21-22.

Police Services

- Amended budget has a decrease of 2.9%. There is a budget increase of 6% for FY 21-22.

Police Investigative

- Amended budget has a decrease of 6.3%. There is a budget increase of 20.8% for FY 21-22. This increase is due to the projected purchase of vehicles.

Police Support Services

- Amended budget has a decrease of 14.5%. There is a budget increase of 2% for FY 21-22. This is assuming there are no changes to the PSAP agreement.
- Alderman Wise inquired about the cost of 911 services. The County was notified that they are in breach of contract. Alderman Wise inquired that since the referendum failed is there a way the City could cap the expense. City Manager

Shumard stated that there has not been a meeting since last fall. There have not been any in person meetings since COVID-19. Mayor Lee stated that the combining of PSAPS was supposed to ensure the same level of service if not better. Mayor Lee stated that the level of service has gone down, the cost continues to go up and we continue to have no cooperation from the County to find a fair funding mechanism. The Mayor and the council would like the City Manager to explore the idea to cap the expense.

Blackhawk Area Task Force

- This is an in and out account, the city receives and disburses funds on behalf of the Task Force.

Public Works Administration

- Amended budget has a decrease of 10.4%. There is a budget increase of 0.9% for FY 21-22.

Public Works Street Maintenance

- Amended budget has a decrease of 0.9%. There is a budget increase of 2.6% for FY 21-22. This was done prior to the notification that Public Works was going to organize.

Public Works Traffic Maintenance

- Amended budget has a decrease of 27.8%. There is a budget decrease of 18.8% for FY 21-22.

Public Works Park Maintenance

- Amended budget has a decrease of 20.8%. There is a budget increase of 37.2% for FY 21-22.
- City Manager Shumard stated there is a need to improve play equipment at the parks.

Building and Zoning Code Enforcement

- Amended budget has a decrease of 6.2%. There is not a budget increase for FY 21-22.

City Shop

- Amended budget has an increase of 1.6%. There is a budget decrease of 13.3% for FY 21-22.

Capital Fund

- Amended revenues are up 3.4%, amended expenses are down 72.8%.

- For FY 21-22 revenues are up 0.9% and expenses are up 5.4%.
- Projected fund balance of \$4.9m.

Library Fund

- Amended revenues are up 1.0%, amended expenses are down 15.1%.
- For FY 21-22 revenues are down 6.3% and expenses are down 31.1%.

Strong Communities Grant

- This is a new fund for the grant, the projected revenues are \$200,000 and the projected expenses are \$188,500.

The budget will be on display on March 26th for 10 days, the budget hearing will be on April 5th and the adoption of the budget will be April 19th.

At 8:06 pm Alderman Stauter made a motion to move to Executive session pursuant to Pursuant to 5ILCS 120/2(c) (2) to discuss collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives and pursuant to 5ILCS 120/2.06 to review closed session minutes; seconded by Alderman Johnson. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Johnson, Martin, Stauter, Wilen and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

At 8:37 pm Alderman Johnson made a motion to return to regular session; seconded by Alderman Stauter. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Johnson, Martin, Stauter, Wilen and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Mayor Lee announced that the deliberation over the list of closed session minutes proved there was still a need for confidentiality and the minutes are to remain closed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Teri Sathoff
City Clerk