

Vice Mayor Joe Martin called a virtual meeting of the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 pm on Monday, June 7, 2021. Roll call. Present: Aldermen Retha Elston, Josh Johnson, Joe Martin, Christine Wilen, Kaitlyn Ekquist and Jim Wise.

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.

Alderman Elston and Alderman Ekquist attended via Zoom, all other members were present in the council chambers. The meeting was recorded and will be kept on the city hard drive. All members in attendance could hear the other members in attendance.

Nolan Anderson 508 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue Sterling with the Sterling Rock Falls Jaycees was present in the council chambers. Mr. Anderson would like to request \$2,500 from the City to assist with paying for the annual fireworks. The Council was in agreement to provide the Jaycees with the funds requested.

Shirley Sharp 2109 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Sterling was present in the council chambers. Mrs. Sharp would like public works to address potholes on East 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue as well as potholes in the area of Greenridge and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

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

- A. Approval of Minutes
- B. Approval of Plan Commission Minutes
- C. Approval of Bills and Payroll
- D. Rock River Hospice and Home to hold a bucket brigade on July 3, 2021
- E. Taste of Fiesta to hold a bucket brigade on June 19, 2021
- F. Pay Request O6 Environmental
- G. Resolution No. R2021-06-16 Regarding the .02% Building and Maintenance Property Tax Levy for the Sterling Public Library.

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

City Planners Mark Sauer and Dustin Wolff with Mead and Hunt presented the Comprehensive Plan to the City Council. The Planning Commission approved resolution

2021-5-15 making a recommendation to approve the Comprehensive Plan. Mark Sauer went over eight key items with the Comprehensive Plan.

1. Comprehensive Plan Background
2. Planning Process and Timeline of process
3. Community Engagement
4. Demographics and housing profiles
5. Key Elements and Plan recommendations
6. Stakeholder Feedback
7. The next steps in the process
8. Adoption of the plan

Alderman Johnson made a motion to pull from the table the tabled agenda item, Waiving the Bid Process and Purchase Park Playground Equipment from NuToys Leisure Products in the amount of \$98,467.00; seconded; Alderman Wise. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Elston stated that she and Alderman Wilen spoke to the principal of Lincoln School, Cindy Frank on May 26, 2021. Mrs. Frank told them that approximately 300 students utilize the park daily. Recess and physical education classes cannot be held at the same time on the school grounds. Space is limited due to the portable classroom and the geo thermal. Alderman Elston stated that the City Parks need to be maintained and kept updated. These are neighborhood parks and they are free to use.

Alderman Johnson stated he spoke to Principal Frank as well and he received the same information.

Alderman Wise inquired if once this equipment is installed at Platt Park would this complete the upgrades to the park. The comprehensive plan shows plans for restrooms and volleyball pit. City Manager Shumard stated bathrooms are a large expense. The tennis courts are in need of improvement.

Alderman Wise stated the comprehensive plan describes what an elected official is and what they do. Alderman Wise stated he understands all the comments that have been made. Wise stated the staff uses all of the resources provided to them to come to a conclusion that they recommend to the council with the expectation that the council will acknowledge all the effort and resources that have been used. Wise stated that the staff made the best recommendation, he is in favor of placing the equipment in Platt and Lincoln Parks.

Alderman Johnson stated that after speaking with Principal Frank and hearing all the comments about the parks and that the equipment will be used, he is in favor of the equipment as well.

Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader stated the vendor will do a "community neighborhood build". They will provide an employee to work with the community to build the equipment. Public works employees will get the site prepped for the build. The equipment will be available in six weeks and the community build schedule will be in August or September.

Alderman Martin asked if there was a plan to speak to service clubs, he asked if there is a need for the alderman to locate volunteers. City Manager Shumard stated that if the motion is passed.

Alderman Elston made a motion to waive the Bid Process and Purchase Park Playground Equipment from NuToys Leisure Products in the amount of \$98,467.00; seconded by Alderman Johnson. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

At 7:48 pm Vice Mayor Alderman Martin opened a Public Hearing for the Downstate Small Business Stabilization Grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. There was no written comments nor was anyone present for the public hearing. Vice Mayor Alderman Martin closed the public hearing at 7:49 pm.

Alderman Wise made a motion to set the time and Place for the City Council to Conduct a Public Hearing with Respect to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan on June 21, 2021 at 6:35 pm; seconded by Alderman Johnson. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Wilen made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2021-06-14 Annexing certain territory contiguous to the City of Sterling (Steelton Subdivision – Group 16); seconded by Alderman Elston. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Johnson made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2021-06-15 Sale of surplus Fire apparatus 1995 Aerial Ladder Truck; seconded by Alderman Ekquist. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Johnson made a motion to Award the contract for Public Works Building Addition Project to the low bidder, Martin & Company of Oregon, IL, in the amount of \$212,241; seconded by Alderman Wilen. Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader stated the reason there is a difference from the budgeted amount and the bid is due to the increase in the price of materials and additional trees being removed. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Ekquist made a motion to Accept the Low Bid for the Demolition of a Two-Story Structure and Detached Garage Located at 711 Ave C from Stichter Construction Company Inc.; seconded by Alderman Johnson. Alderman Wise asked if the lot is a buildable lot, Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt stated it is a nonconforming lot however there are 2 neighbors that may be interested in purchasing it. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Wise made a motion authorize a rebate of 40% of health insurance premiums for calendar year 2020 to active employees; seconded by Alderman Elston. City Manager Shumard stated this is something that has never been done, it is not typical to have excess funds in the account. The City could lower the premium but may have to raise it again next year. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried

Alderman Wilen made a motion to purchase 2021 Chevrolet Trailblazer in the amount of \$23,318.60 for the Detective Division; seconded by Alderman Johnson. Alderman Wilen asked if the \$6,000 that remains will be enough to install the needed equipment, Chief Chavira stated that they are able to reuse a majority of the equipment and they will not need the entire amount. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried

Alderman Wise made a motion to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement with Sterling Fire Department; seconded by Alderman Ekquist. City Manager Shumard thanked the Union President, Garrett Ramos, and the members of the negotiating committee for being cooperative and easy to work with. They worked well together, something that hasn't happened in the past. Shumard stated that this group of firefighters really want to improve the department and make it a professional environment. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Martin, Wilen, Johnson, Ekquist and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt reported that the City was awarded an additional \$20,000 from the State of Illinois Abandoned Property Program (APP) Grant. This money can be used for demolition or rehab of abandoned properties. Funds from the Strong Communities grant was used for demolition of a house on 7<sup>th</sup>

Avenue as well as reroofing the property at 405 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue and demolishing the garage there. This is a four plex that we are looking for a developer to rehab it.

Attorney Zollinger reported that the State completed the redistricting for the State Representative and State Senate seats, at the State level they used census estimate figures. Once the data for the City becomes available in August, the City will need to look at the wards to make sure they remain uniform.

City Clerk Teri Sathoff reported that the dates for the IML Conference in Chicago have been announced, the conference will be held September 23<sup>rd</sup> through September 25<sup>th</sup>.

City Manager Shumard reported there was a pre-construction meeting for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues last week, the engineers are waiting on the start date from the contractor. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue is moving along, there will be a large change order on this due to the soil quality. They are installing more base gravel than anticipated. Shumard also reported the Joint Review Board for the Kmart TIF is set for June 24<sup>th</sup> and the Public Hearing will be in July. The Police Department has made an offer to the new IT replacement for Dennis Fellows, he will be starting soon pending physical results. There is now an agreement with the School district for the sidewalk between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the property owner will have to give up 2 feet of right of way. National wastewater treatment clean-up continues, it was supposed to be completed by now however, they have found contaminants into the concrete, they may have to remove it as hazardous material. They are working on a solution for this. The City of Rock Falls has decided to dissolve the Twin City Fire Command, Sterling will have to move forward, Shumard stated he feels this a step in the wrong direction and he is disappointed in the decision.

Alderman Wise stated that he went to the Rock Falls Council meeting, June 30, 2021 will be one full year that we will not have a chief, and Alderman Wise stated he would like to expedite the process of filling the vacancy.

Alderman Ekquist thanked her fellow councilmen for making the best decisions for the City, she also stated she is excited for the new comprehensive plan.

Alderman Elston asked Deputy Chief Dettman how the Fire Department inspects vacant businesses, Dettman advised her if the property is vacant it does not get inspected on an annual basis. The property will be inspected when a new business moves in, a pre occupancy inspection is done by the Building Department and the Fire Department. Alderman Elston would like to look into a vacant property ordinance. Alderman Wise stated they had looked into an ordinance for vacant properties, this was put on the back burner with COVID-19. Alderman Elston stated she has been receiving phone calls from members of the public about motorized bicycles. Chief Chavira advised Alderman Elston and the public to contact the Police Department at the time of the incident.

Alderman Wilen stated that she has had an interesting couple of months she had a couple of issues she had assistance from Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt, Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader.

Alderman Johnson thanked the department heads for meeting with him and Alderman Ekquist, Johnson stated there are some great people working for the City and it was nice to finally meet all of them.

Alderman Martin thanked Sterling Legion Post 296 for the Memorial Day program that was put on. Martin stated he watched the Rock Falls City Council meeting and he would like to express his disappointment with their decision to dissolve the Twin City Joint Fire Command. Martin also thanked Captain Jeremy Billeb and Lieutenant Mike Mackey for responding to his residence for an electrical issue. Alderman Martin stated the public should never be afraid to call the Fire Department they are very helpful.

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm.

Teri Sathoff  
City Clerk