

SPECIAL MEETING
CITY COUNCIL

JANUARY 21, 2015

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Syracuse, Nebraska met at 6:00 P.M. on January 21, 2015 in special session in Council Chambers at 495 Midland Street. Present were Mayor Ortiz, Council members Gigstad, Dettmer, Britton and Henke. Notice of meeting was given by posting in three places. A copy of the posting notice and acknowledgement of notice to the Council is attached to these minutes. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the advance notice. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the meeting was open to the public.

Garry Carman, Superintendent of Public Works, reviewed with Mayor and Council the One & Six Year Street Plan. Included in the one year plan are the repair of 5th Street curb & gutter and the Midland Street overlay from 6th to 8th Street. The six year plan is the repair of 5th Street curb & gutter, the Midland Street overlay from 6th to 8th Street, remove and replace concrete alley and overlay of Old Highway 2 from Park Street to Oak Street.

Superintendent Carman would like to contact Evan Wickersham of JEO Consulting Group, Inc. to proceed with engineers estimate for asphalt overlay of Midland Street from 6th to 8th Street.

Council Britton made the motion to proceed with obtaining an engineer's estimate for overlay of Midland Street, second by Gigstad. Roll Call: Yeas: Dettmer, Britton, Henke, Gigstad. Nays: None.

The public hearing for One and Six Year Street Plan will be held at the February 11, 2015 meeting.

Superintendent Carman would like to instruct Evan Wickersham of JEO Consulting Group, Inc. to contact K-C Construction and get an estimate on what the increase in cost would be to increase the size of water main from 6 inch to 8 inch for the water main extension. Carman stated that he has not received any information if the proposed project south of Utility shop is still planned but believes it would be beneficial for the City to increase the water capacity now for future development.

Mayor and Council agree and Superintendent Carman will contact Wickersham and obtain a cost for increase in size of water main.

City Attorney Jerry Stilmock stated that he has spoken with Geneie Andrews with LARM and the City's liability insurance with not provide coverage for anyone participating in the SVS Ride Along Program. City Attorney Stilmock stated that even the larger communities are no longer doing such programs due to the liability issues. City Attorney Stilmock stated that LARM questioned if the School District would cover the participants, but that is not possible, as it is not a School sponsored activity.

City Attorney Stilmock stated that he had additional questions for Rescue Chief Tim Wilson, but he had not returned Stilmock's telephone calls. Stilmock will visit with Chief Wilson and Geneie Andrews of LARM.

Mayor and Council agreed that without liability insurance coverage, they could not support or approve the program.

Discussion and review of bids for mower for Park Department was tabled until February 11, 2015 meeting.

Mayor Ortiz questioned if the Council had reviewed the job descriptions and step pay plan. Mayor Ortiz reviewed with Council the employees that are currently holding the positions outlined.

Council Britton questioned that since the City employees perform a variety of jobs that are not outlined in their job description, that the statement “Perform all other duties as assigned” should be adding to all job descriptions. Mayor and Council agreed and instructed City Clerk Hobscheidt to add “Perform all other duties as assigned” to all job descriptions.

Mayor Ortiz stated that the next step would be to get the job descriptions out to all employees for their review. Mayor Ortiz is requesting that the employees add duties they are performing that are not listed or subtract duties not being done by employee.

Mayor Ortiz and Council reviewed the job titles. Mayor and Council agreed that the current titles are too long or confusing. Changes were made as follows: Superintendent of Utilities to Superintendent of Public Works, Wastewater/Water Operator & Street Maintenance to Wastewater/Water Operator, Maintenance & Street & Water and Sewer to Wastewater Operator, Maintenance & Street to General Maintenance Technician, Electrician, Lineman, Wastewater & General Maintenance to Electric Utility Worker, Electric, Lineman to Electric Utility Worker, Park Maintenance & Snow Removal to Park Maintenance, Recreation Coordinator/Pool Manager to Recreation Coordinator.

City Clerk, Utility Billing Clerk, Office Clerk and Library Director titles will stay the same.

Mayor Ortiz stated he will add the new titles to the Step Pay Plan. Mayor Ortiz stated that this plan does not mean that employees will be given an automatic 3% increase every year. The employee evaluation and salary plan provides for employees to be given salary increases according to job performance.

Mayor and Council discussed additional pay increases for additional schooling and certification. Also discussed were scheduled overtime virus emergency overtime and how the employee should be compensated. Mayor Ortiz stated that some of the employees work unconventional hours and there is a need to work week-ends. Mayor Ortiz feels that these employees should take off during the work week to offset hours worked on week-ends. Mayor Ortiz feels that overtime hours for all City employees should be reviewed and make sure that employees are being compensated but that working overtime is not being abused.

Also discussed is the cross training of all employees. All positions need to have a backup employee who could perform duties in case of emergency.

Mayor Ortiz will take back all information provided by Council and update reports.

Mayor Ortiz stated that the City has three options with the retirement of the present City Clerk. Option One is to hire a City Administrator, Option Two would be to hire a fourth Clerk who duties would include City Treasurer, payroll and special projects and Option Three to continue with three clerks in City Hall.

Superintendent of Public Works Garry Carman has informed Mayor Ortiz that Eldon Halm will be retiring the end of February and he does not feel that position needs to be filled. Carman stated that the Public Works can function with five men due to the hiring of two electricians in the past year.

Mayor Ortiz stated that he would like to hire a City Administrator but did not see that being feasible for a community the size of Syracuse. His recommendation is to hire an additional clerk to take care of duties of City Treasurer, payroll clerk, grant writing and special projects.

Mayor Ortiz stated that there is a present City Administrator who will soon be no longer in that position and is planning on doing a consulting business and the City would be able to hire this individual on a project by project basis.

Mayor Ortiz stated that there needs to be one individual in charge of all employees; one individual who can coordinate activities and instruct employees to help other departments with projects. An employee who can serve as Manager or neutral person that can help resolve all conflicts or problems and be in charge of reprimanding employee who are not performing their duties and report back to the Mayor. This could be the City Clerk.

Council member Britton stated that he was in favor of the four Clerks and hiring the individual in a consulting position as needed. This could possibly be a stepping stone to hiring a City Administrator in the future. Council member Britton also stated that the City could look into sharing personnel, equipment and resources with other municipalities for a cost savings for the City.

Council member Gigstad stated that they would like to hire a City Administrator in the future but does not see that happening right away.

Council member Dettmer is also in favor of a City Administrator but time does not allow that now and is in favor of having the head Clerk being in charge of all employees.

Council member Henke is in favor of hiring of an additional clerk and having the City Clerk in charge of employees.

Council member Britton made the motion to proceed with four clerks in City Office and advertising of positions of City Clerk, City Treasurer/Payroll Clerk and Superintendent of Public Works, second by Henke. Roll Call: Yeas: Britton, Henke, Gigstad, Dettmer. Nays: None.

Council member Dettmer made the motion to adjourn at 9:00 P.M, second by Gigstad. Roll Call: Yeas: Gigstad, Dettmer, Britton, Henke. Nays: None.

I the undersigned Clerk hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the proceedings had and done by the Mayor and Council; that all of the subjects included in the foregoing proceedings were contained in the agenda for the meeting; kept continually and available for inspection at the office of the City Clerk; that such subjects were contained in the said agenda for at least twenty-four hours prior to the said meeting; that at least one copy of the reproducible material discussed at the meeting was available at the meeting for the examination and copying by members of the public; that the said minutes were in written form and available for public inspection within ten working days or prior to the next convened meeting of the body; that all news media requesting notification concerning the date, time and place of said body were provided advance notification of time and place of said meeting and subjects to be discussed at said meeting.



City Clerk



Mayor