

Strawberry Point City Council
Regular Meeting June 21, 2017

The Strawberry Point City Council met for a regular meeting on Wednesday, June 21st, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers of City Hall. Mayor Bente presided and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members answering roll call were Rowcliffe, Johnson, Kuehl and Hansel. Absent: Evans.

Johnson moved to approve the agenda as presented. Hansel seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Rowcliffe, Johnson, Kuehl and Hansel. Nays: None. Motion passes.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes from June 7th

Claims/ Additional Claims

Rowcliffe moved to approve the consent agenda with the additional claims. Kuehl seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Kuehl, Hansel and Rowcliffe. Nays: None. Abstain: Johnson. Motion passes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mayor stated that the topic of City Fire Department equipment/gear has been withdrawn at this time.

INFORMATION

Council had no questions regarding the Fire Department Minutes from May 24th and June 14th.

NEW BUSINESS

Brett Streicher, Economic Development Board President spoke with the Council about the services that the Economic Development Fund (SPEDF) provides. Mr. Streicher noted that the organization is actually a corporation that was formed in 1960 by local businesses with the support of the city. The intent of the Corporation was to help the City develop and maintain the growth of businesses in the community. SPEDF is financed almost exclusively through a share of the local option sales tax received by the City. The funds employ the Economic Development Director who handles the day to day operations of SPEDF and acts as an intermediary with the City. Without the funds, there are currently no other available resources and SPEDF would most likely no longer operate. The Director works discreetly with local businesses to offer assistance in maintaining or if possible expanding their current business operations. The Director also works to bring new businesses to the area, sells the lots at the Industrial Park and organizes the housing incentive program to promote new residential construction. Most communities in the area with populations similar or greater to Strawberry Point have an Economic Development Director or similar position. Further discussion occurred. Council thanked Mr. Streicher for coming to speak with the Council.

Council reviewed Resolution 17-04 – A resolution to provide for a notice of hearing on proposed plans, specifications, form of contract and estimate of cost for the Ammonia Removal and UV Disinfection Project, and the taking of bids therefor. Johnson moved to approve resolution 17-04. Kuehl seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Kuehl, Hansel, Rowcliffe and Johnson. Nays: None. Motion passes.

Council reviewed Resolution 17-05 – A resolution supporting the Park and Recreation Board applying for the CAT grant from Iowa Department of Economic Development and show of support for the pool project. Council verified that this resolution was just showing support of the application for the grant and the pool project. After further discussion, Johnson moved to approve resolution 17-05. Kuehl seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Hansel, Rowcliffe, Johnson and Kuehl. Nays: None. Motion passes.

City Administrator Osweiler presented Council with information regarding her recommendations for necessary upgrades for the City's IT, Security, Phone and Copier needs. Her recommendation was to move forward with contracts with Access Systems, a leading company in the State. Currently, the City's internal computer network is not structured correctly. The City further does

not have an adequate backup plan and the security features in place, while they are working, do need to be upgraded to keep up with new threats that are surfacing. The cost would be split between utility funds and general fund. Osweiler also felt that the phone system is not adequate. Currently if any citizens call, there is one phone line and if any City Staff is on the phone, the other call will not come through and go to voicemail. She mentioned how this is extremely frustrating for both sides – staff and residents. The proposed upgrade would allow a second call to ring through. It would allow staff to transfer calls between departments without having to give residents a separate number to have to hang up and call. Additionally each person would have their own voicemail and there were other features that would help with efficiency. While this would be an entirely new cost to the city, the cost would essentially be a “net neutral” cost. This would be due to the fact that Osweiler also worked with Access to provide quotes for copier/fax machines. By contracting for new more efficient and economical copiers, the yearly savings would offset the cost of the phone system. Council inquired who currently services the computers for IT needs. Osweiler said that it is always handled “in house”, by either herself or Theresa Callahan. This presents a problem as this often takes up a considerable amount of time and delays other necessary work from being done. Council member Johnson felt that all of these items were really necessary and that this was preventative, particularly the area of IT/Security. Council member Kuehl agreed that all of these items need to be addressed and felt that Osweiler had done a good job researching the topic and accessing costs. However, he felt that Council should wait until the next meeting to make a decision, so they would be able to review the budget numbers for the end of the fiscal year (ending June 30th). Council members Hansel and Rowcliffe agreed. Osweiler made a note to put it on the agenda for the July 5th meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mayor Bente took a moment to address some of the concerns that have been raised around town. Regarding the generation plant and the purchase offer that was submitted to the City by Allamakee-Clayton Electric Co-op, the offer was reviewed by the Electric Study Committee. The Committee members while not elected, have been appointed by previous Council. Many of these members have considerable knowledge and experience with our City’s system. They are a valuable asset to our community and whom the City has trusted to make recommendations in the past. The offer given to the City was not a viable option for our community; the proposed total was well below the value of the system. Therefore it was in the City’s best interest to pass on the offer. Regarding the topic of agenda packets, these are always available to the public at City Hall. Mayor Bente also stated that everyone needs to focus on the positive within this City.

Alan Wessels updated the Council on the events of the power outage on Sunday, June 11th. He first wanted to assure everyone that the generators did not fail. There was never a drop in service from Allamakee-Clayton and therefore there was never a signal for the generators to turn on. The issue that occurred was a utility tie breaker tripped out. This was a problem that used to occur at the generation plant but has not happened in well over a year. Wessels and a member of the Public Works team worked as quickly as they could to have power restored to the City. The City was without power for approximately one hour. Wessels and Public Works have worked together with Allamakee-Clayton on the problem and it is still unknown as to why the utility tie breaker tripped out. There was no negligence on Allamakee-Clayton or the City’s side. On Monday, June 19th, the City conducted a generation test, as they have been doing monthly. The test successfully generated for one hour. Everything at the plant is working at the level it should be.

With no further business, Kuehl moved to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. Hansel seconded the motion. Motion passes.

Alison Osweiler, City Clerk/Administrator

Jeff Bente, Mayor