
SYCAMORE CITY COUNCIL –MEETING 6:00 PM
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 2, 2023 – 308 WEST STATE ST. SYCAMORE, IL 60178

ROLL CALL

Mayor Braser called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and City Clerk Mary Kalk called the roll. Those Alderpersons present were Alan Bauer, Ben Bumpus, Alicia Cosky, Jeff Fischer, Pete Paulsen, Virginia Sherrod, and Chuck Stowe. Alderperson Nancy Copple was absent. Attorney Keith Foster was also present.

INVOCATION led by Alderperson Virginia Sherrod

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE led by Alderperson Virginia Sherrod

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION

Alderperson Sherrod motioned to approve the agenda and Alderperson Fischer seconded the motion.

VOICE VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderpersons voted aye. Motion carried 7-0.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the Minutes for the Regular City Council Meeting of September 18, 2023
- B. Payment of the Bills for October 2, 2023, in the amount of \$1,345,146.01.

MOTION

Alderperson Bauer motioned to approve the Consent Agenda and Alderperson Stowe seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Alderpersons Bauer, Bumpus, Cosky, Fischer, Paulsen, Sherrod, and Stowe voted aye. Motion carried 7-0.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND BILLS

- A. A Proclamation Declaring the Week of October 8-14, 2023, as Fire Prevention Week in the City of Sycamore, Illinois.

- B. Presentation by the Turning Back Time Car Club Regarding the Successes of their 2023 Event.
Madeline DeVito, 1525 Sunflower Drive, President, reported that this year's event broke all records. The event was able to give \$21,000 to many local organizations.

- C. Presentation by City Manager Michael Hall on Funding Sources for New Fire Station #1.
City Manager Michael Hall showed a video created by Firefighter Ian Wheeler and reviewed from the agenda and a handout included here within which will be available on the city's website. He said this is one solution, not THE solution as information is still being gathered.

Discussions revolved around the current bonds, interest rates, reserves, current debts, future unknown expenditures, making this information available and including input from the public.

City Manager Michael Hall said that this information will be put out to the public. With this being Fire Prevention Month, both stations are having open houses, and the city is having a Coffee & Convo with the Chamber in November.

Mayor Braser added that the city cannot apply for grants until there is a plan but that this is a great initial start. He gave compliments to Michael Hall and Kristian Dominguez for all their work.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

City Manager Michael Hall reported that they received the results for the lead sampling which will be posted on the city's website. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) requires testing 30 sites and additional 20 sites, as part of the settlement agreement, for a total of 50 samples. Of the 50 samples, zero had lead levels that exceeded the actionable levels of 15 ppb (parts per billion) which is fantastic. The City's 90th percentile that's reported to the IEPA is 4.9 ppb. For reference, last year's was 6 ppb. Overall, this 4.9 ppb level is the lowest since 2014.

Mayor Braser added that even reaching out and doing mailings to people with unknown services, people still aren't responding.

Assistant Public Director Jake Keck said there are still 240 unknown services, so they will be reaching out to the residents again. He asked for everyone to share with others to have them contact the city.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance – Alan Bauer – no report

Public Safety – Pete Paulsen – no report

Public Works – Chuck Stowe – no report

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ORDINANCES

- A. Ordinance No. 2023.16 – An Ordinance Amending Title 7, "Public Ways and Property," Chapter 1, "Streets, Sidewalks and Public Ways, General Provisions," Section 4, "Maintenance," and Section 15, "Snow Removal," AND Amending Title 7, "Public Ways and Property," Chapter 3, "Excavations," Section 2, "Application for Permit; Fees," and Section 3, "Deposit," AND Amending Title 8, "Water and Sewer," Chapter 2, "Water Use and Service," Section 6, "Repairs or Replacement; Excavations," AND Amending Title 9, "Building Regulations," Chapter 2, "Fees," Section 2, "Building Permit Fees," of the City Code of the City of Sycamore, Illinois. First and Second Reading.

City Manager Michael Hall said the changes involve cleaning up the code for the building impact fees from two spots to just one spot in Chapter 10, formalizing policies for maintaining abutting rights-of-way for mowing and removing snow, updating to modern finances in that contractors must carry a bond in the amount not less than \$10,000, and cleaning up resident responsibility in that from the water main to the B-box will be the responsibility of the city with the residents now being responsible from the B-box to the property.

Alderman Bauer, in the case of the sewer, confirmed that the residents are responsible to the main.

Alderman Bumpus inquired how the residents will be informed and asked not to give up on the attempts.

City Manager Michael Hall said that although it will be in the Municipal Code, residents will be informed mostly when work is required. Staff will notify them and discuss the area and repairs.

Community Development Director John Sauter said in regard to Title 7, that in the cases of no homeowner's association, it will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

MOTION

Alderman Fischer made a motion to waive First Reading on Ordinance 2023.16 and Alderman Bumpus seconded the motion.

VOICE VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Aldermen voted aye. Motion carried 7-0.

MOTION

Alderman Fischer made a motion to approve Ordinance 2023.16 and Alderman Stowe seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Alderpersons Bauer, Bumpus, Cosky, Fischer, Paulsen, Sherrod, and Stowe voted aye. Motion carried 7-0.

RESOLUTIONS

- A. Resolution No. 954 – A Resolution Approving a Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Sycamore and the International Association of the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police and Lodge #133.

City Manager Michael Hall said that this was meant to be on the last agenda after the closed session, so just looking for approval.

MOTION

Aldersperson Bumpus made a motion to approve Resolution 954 and Aldersperson Sherrod seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Alderpersons Bauer, Bumpus, Cosky, Fischer, Paulsen, Sherrod, and Stowe voted aye. Motion carried 7-0.

- B. Resolution No. 955 – A Resolution Declaring Surplus Property, Authorizing the Sale of the Property, and Authorizing a Sealed Bid Sale of the Real Estate Located at 1118 Wild Street in the City of Sycamore, Illinois.

City Manager Michael Hall said that this resolution is required to declare surplus property, authorize sale of the property, and authorize the sealed bids. The appraisal came in at \$13,000 for which minimum bids must be at least 80% of the value. He noted that the city spent \$24,000.

MOTION

Aldersperson Cosky made a motion to approve Resolution 955 and Aldersperson Sherrod seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Alderpersons Bauer, Bumpus, Cosky, Fischer, Paulsen, Sherrod, and Stowe voted aye. Motion carried 7-0.

CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Consideration of a Downtown & Gateway Improvement Program Application from Sycamore Moose Lodge #1506 to Update the Front Exterior of their Properties at 313 and 317 West State Street, Sycamore, Illinois.

City Manager Michael Hall said the Moose Lodge is looking to replace siding, repaint, replace trim, replace windows, and replace the eastern door totaling \$21,000. The program is a matching \$5,000 for each address, so the total grant would be \$10,000.

Al Mannis, Moose Lodge Administrator said on behalf of the all the Moose members, said "THANK YOU".

MOTION

Aldersperson Fischer made a motion to approve the Consideration and Aldersperson Stowe seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Alderpersons Bauer, Bumpus, Cosky, Fischer, Paulsen, Sherrod, and Stowe voted aye. Motion carried 7-0.

- B. Consideration of an Administrative Recommendation to Award a Contract in the Amount of \$12,900.00 to GC Design of Minooka, IL for the 2023 Tree Planting Project.

City Manager Michael Hall said that this is an annual program where the city pays 50% of the cost of a tree for 30 trees. The lowest bid came in at \$12,900.

MOTION

Aldersperson Paulsen made a motion to approve the Consideration and Aldersperson Fischer seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Alderpersons Bauer, Bumpus, Cosky, Fischer, Paulsen, Sherrod, and Stowe voted aye. Motion carried 7-0.

- C. Consideration of a Community Development Recommendation to Purchase a New 2024 Chevrolet Equinox from Miles Chevrolet of Decatur, Illinois, for \$27,752.00.

City Manager Michael Hall said that this is a budget item to replace the 2009 Ford Escape. This is the State bid for a 2024 Chevrolet Equinox for \$27,753 which is under budget.

MOTION

Alderson Paulsen made a motion to approve the Consideration and Alderson Bumpus seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Alderpersons Bauer, Bumpus, Cosky, Fischer, Paulsen, Sherrod, and Stowe voted aye. Motion carried 7-0.

APPOINTMENTS

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

Alderson Stowe motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:01 p.m. and Alderson Paulsen seconded the motion.

VOICE VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderpersons voted aye. Motion carried 7-0.

Mayor – Steve Braser

Attest:

City Clerk – Mary Kalk



How do we pay for a new Fire Station #1 without raising property taxes?

Talking Point #1

- The City's portion of property tax is 7.4%.
- Property taxes account for approximately \$2 million of the \$22 million General Fund Revenue, or approximately 10% of the General Fund Revenue.
- General Fund Actual Revenue has exceeded General Fund Budgeted Revenue on average \$1.8 million per year over the last 5 years.

Talking Point #2

- Current General Obligation debt consists of one Refunding Bond from 2017 for the PD.
- The remaining balance after the April 2024 principal / interest payment will be \$1,772,584.
- The last payment is due April 2028.
- The yearly payment is approximately \$330,000.

Talking Point #3

- Current General Fund Balance is approximately \$14,000,000.
- Best accounting practices suggest leaving between 20% and 30% of GF operating funds in the General Fund Balance. This would be \$4.4 million to \$6.6 million for "rainy day."
- This leaves approximately \$7.4 million for discretionary one-time projects.

Talking Point #4

- New Debt for Fire Station #1
- The Bond Buyer General Obligation Bond Index has current GO rates at 3.84% with the average 5-year at 2.99% as of August 2023.
- If the City were to borrow \$10 million issuance in January of 2025 for 20 years at 5% assumed interest rate,
- The total debt service payment per year would be \$770,000 for \$10 million at 5% interest rate.

Recommendation #1

- Pay off the GO Refunding Bond from 2017 using GF Balance \$1,772,584.
- Remaining discretionary GF balance after paying off 2017 GO Debt would be \$5,629,416.
- This will be built back over time.

Recommendation #2

- Reapply current 2017 GO debt payment of \$330,000 toward new Fire Station debt. This would leave \$440,000 remaining.
- Currently the ambulance fee revenue is averaging \$130,000 per month.
- Propose dedicating \$36,666 per month or \$440,000 per year toward new Fire Station #1 debt.
- This gives the city the \$770,000 per year needed to cover a \$10 million GO Bond.

Planning a New SYCAMORE FIRE STATION 1



WHO

The Sycamore City Council has opted to pursue the construction of a new Fire Station 1 utilizing the architectural services of FGM Architects of Oak Brook, Illinois. City Manager Michael Hall, in tandem with Sycamore Fire Department administration and personnel, are evaluating how to optimize the Department's ability to serve our community.

WHAT

At its June 5, 2023 meeting, City Council was provided four options to address a Fire Station 1 Space Needs Study performed by Kluber Architects: 1) Do nothing; 2) Address deferred maintenance from 2017; 3) Rebuild Station 1 at its current site; or 4) Build a new station in a new location. Having considered results of the space needs study, photo documentation of disrepair, and personal experience touring Station 1, Council opted to pursue Option 4 and approve the execution of an architectural agreement with FGM Architects.

WHERE

Land for the new station has been generously donated by Sycamore's own Ideal Industries and is located at the southwest corner of Borden Avenue & South Prairie Drive. This location will more evenly distribute the call response area between Stations 1 and 2 and is nestled within residential, educational, and business areas of our community.

WHEN

The City hopes to break ground in Spring 2025. Project leaders are excited to share updates with the community as the project progresses through each phase from concept design to construction. Check in on the latest developments at cityofsycamore.com/newstation!

Now | Then



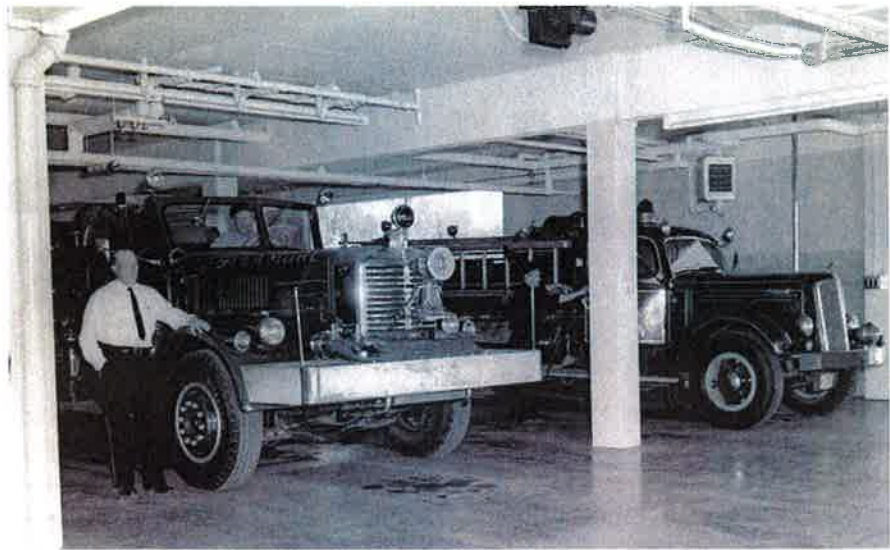
The Sycamore Fire Department responds to approximately 3,000 calls for service per year. Fire Station 1 remains essentially the same as when it was originally constructed over six decades ago.



Fire Station 1 was built in 1957 and originally served as a shared municipal building between the Sycamore Police and Fire Departments, as well as City Hall. Volunteer firefighters responded to about 89 calls per year.

WHY

Station 1 has largely retained its original structure and systems since its construction in 1957. It poses a multitude of health and safety risks to the first responders it houses and is grossly inefficient at meeting the needs of today's fire service operations. Space limitations and a growing list of critical issues can no longer be addressed with expensive band-aids. A new, safe, practical, and efficient Station 1 will equip the Sycamore Fire Department with the appropriate environment and resources it relies on to continue its strong service to our community.



ABOVE: Inside the Station 1 apparatus bay, circa 1958. **BELOW:** Inside the Station 1 apparatus bay from the same position and perspective, present day.

HOW

City Manager Michael Hall collaborated with the City's Finance Department to create a strategic funding plan, which was presented to Council at its October 2nd, 2023 meeting. This plan uses the General Fund Balance to eliminate existing debt and borrows a new \$10M issuance to fund the construction of Fire Station 1. The money previously applied to past debt will be reapplied to the new debt in conjunction with ambulance fees to cover the resulting new debt service payments *without raising property taxes*.



Watch this video to learn more about the critical issues facing the SFD's current Station #1 and keep up with New Station #1 project developments at cityofsycamore.com/newstation.

QUESTIONS?

Stop by the Station for a tour, or reach out by phone or email:

Michael Hall, City Manager

☎ (815) 895-4853 ✉ mhall@cityofsycamore.com

Bart Gilmore, Fire Chief

☎ (815) 895-4514 ✉ bgilmore@cityofsycamore.com

