
SYCAMORE CITY COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF MAY 2, 2022 – 308 WEST STATE ST. SYCAMORE, IL 60178

ROLL CALL

Mayor Braser called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and City Clerk Mary Kalk called the roll. Those Alderpersons present were: Chuck Stowe, Alan Bauer, Nancy Copple, Jeff Fischer, Josh Huseman, Pete Paulsen, Virginia Sherrod, and David Stouffer. City Attorney Keith Foster was also present.

INVOCATION Led by Alderperson Virginia Sherrod

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Led by Mayor Steve Braser

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION

Alderperson Copple 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 8-0.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the Minutes for the Regular City Council Meeting of April 18, 2022.
- B. Payment of the Bills for May 2, 2022 in the amount of \$532,014.69.

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 Stowe, Bauer, Copple, Fischer, Huseman, Paulsen, Sherrod, and Stouffer voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND BILLS

- A. A Proclamation Declaring May 1st through May 7th, 2022 as Public Service Recognition Week in the City of Sycamore, Illinois.
- B. A Proclamation Declaring May 2022 as Motorcycle Awareness Month in the City of Sycamore, Illinois.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

City Manager Michael Hall said there is a swearing-in on June 2nd for the new Deputy Police Chief, the new Sergeant, and the therapy and comfort dog Jax. Deputy Chief Steve Cook will also be honored in celebration of his retirement after 30 years of service with the Sycamore Police Department.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance – Alan Bauer said no report
Public Safety – Pete Paulsen – no report
Public Works – Chuck Stowe – no report

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ORDINANCES

- A. Ordinance No. 2022.01 – An Ordinance Amending Title 1, “Administration,” Chapter 10, “Personnel Rules,” Section 3, “Residency Requirements,” of the City Code of the City of Sycamore, Illinois. First and Second Reading.

City Manager Michael Hall said this is to create more flexibility in the residency requirements. The union contracts currently have a residency requirement specifically for Fire and Police which are the First Responders and he is not looking to change anything there as that would be union. This is looking at the non-first responders to add more flexibility within the residency requirement which is currently 20 miles. There is now an excellent candidate that is 22 miles from the residency requirement. They would like to change it so it is by policy which will be brought before the City Council listing off what is considered as First Responders and listing the areas like finance, secretaries, building maintenance workers, those that don't really require having a residency of 20 miles, looking for flexibility in hiring because they are having some difficulties.

Alderman Cople referred to the Employee Handbook, noting the unions and exempt employees, clarifying for those not under a union contract. She asked if there would be a fifth provision stating non-exempt employees that are not first responders or by union contract can live outside the 20 miles. She confirmed, though that the City Manager is required to still live in within the 20 mile requirement.

City Manager Michael Hall said yes, to the provision and yes, he is required to live within the requirement by contract, he does, and that would not change.

Alderman Stouffer suggested instead of waiving the requirement but extending it out to 25 miles or even 30 miles still keeping some kind of mileage requirement instead of opening it up to just policy. He did add though that he thinks living within a residency requirement lends itself to a more invested employee in the community and having the requirement would be beneficial for the city.

City Manager Michael Hall said it would be by policy, they are allowing flexibility on non-first responders or job title rather than setting a hard and fast 20 or 30 miles. By policy, they will lay out positions for the council to approve.

Alderman Huseman confirmed that this would be reflected in the employee handbook where it lists out management and unions. He asked how the employee handbook is modified. He also said that he would be supportive of this as he was surprised to see that every employee has the 20 mile requirement, but would first want to see the updated employee handbook to review the policies before approving it.

City Manager Michael Hall said that changes to the handbook would be brought forward to be approved by City Council. He said it could take several months for the handbook to be fully updated and there is an applicant that they want to hire as the Assistant Finance Director, who is head and shoulders above the rest, but is at 22 miles.

Alderman Bauer asked how the fairness is going to be handled as they could end up with a problem with someone that had to move to comply.

City Manager Michael Hall said that happens quite often, for example compensation time. Anybody that was hired prior to 2017, gets the entire comp time paid at separation, however, anybody hired after 2017, doesn't get any.

Alderman Cople confirmed if a fifth category would just be added in the handbook for non-first responders.

Alderman Huseman said that if they approve this tonight, the handbook still exists with no changes. He said that we live in a world where there is extremely difficult recruiting.

City Manager Michael Hall said that that is correct so next meeting he could bring forward the change in that policy. He said they would leave it on First Reading and bring the policy forward to the next meeting.

B. Ordinance No. 2022.02 – An Ordinance Amending Title 3, “Business and License Regulations,” Chapter 24, “Mobile Food Vendors,” of the City Code of the City of Sycamore, Illinois. First and Second Reading.

City Manager Michael Hall said that Council may want to leave this on First Reading, too, if there are any changes the council wants to see. This is something that staff has been looking at to make it easier for food truck vendors to come into the city. This is basically removing some of the requirements including fingerprinting and backgrounds, and the three Sycamore resident references. This is broken down to health, life, and safety requiring the DeKalb County Health Department certificate and the Fire Department inspection. For the fixed-point food trucks, zoning and set-backs to name a few will be reviewed.

Staff has reviewed this quite heavily. Chamber Executive Director, Rose Trembl told him that she is very much in support of this especially for having food trucks at the Farmer's Market.

MOTION

Alderson Stouffer motioned to waive First Reading on Ordinance 2022.02 and Alderson Huseman seconded the motion.

VOICE VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Aldersons voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

MOTION

Alderson Stouffer motioned to adopt Ordinance 2022.02 and Alderson Huseman seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Aldersons Stowe, Bauer, Copple, Fischer, Huseman, Paulsen, Sherrod, and Stouffer voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

RESOLUTIONS

- A. Resolution No. 911 – A Resolution Requesting Permission from the Illinois Department of Transportation to Close Illinois Route 64 from Main Street to Sacramento Street from 5:00 AM until 5:00 PM on Sunday, July 31, 2022 to Allow for the "Turning Back Time" Car Show in the City of Sycamore, Illinois.

MOTION

Alderson Stowe motioned to take Resolution 911, 912, 913, and 914 in omnibus fashion and Alderson Bauer seconded the motion.

VOICE VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Aldersons voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- B. Resolution No. 912 – A Resolution Requesting Permission from the Illinois Department of Transportation to Close Illinois Route 64 from Governor Street to Sacramento Street from 6:00 PM until 7:30 PM on Wednesday, October 5, 2022 to Allow for the Sycamore High School Homecoming Parade in the City of Sycamore, Illinois.
- C. Resolution No. 913 – A Resolution Requesting Permission from the Illinois Department of Transportation to Close Illinois Route 64 from Kingsway Drive to Sacramento Street from 8:30 AM until 10:00 AM on Sunday, October 30, 2022 to Allow for the "Pumpkin Run" as Part of the Pumpkin Festival in the City of Sycamore, Illinois.
- D. Resolution No. 914 – A Resolution Requesting Permission from the Illinois Department of Transportation to Close Illinois Route 64 from Locust Street to Sacramento Street from 12:00 PM until 5:00 PM on Sunday, October 30, 2022 to Allow for the Pumpkin Festival Parade in the City of Sycamore, Illinois.

MOTION

Alderson Copple motioned to approve Resolution 911, 912, 913, and 914 and Alderson Fisher seconded the motion.

VOICE VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Aldersons voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- E. Resolution No. 915 – A Resolution to Enter into a Professional Services Agreement with Trotter and Associates, Inc. to Prepare Final Engineering Documents and Complete Bidding Services for the Proposed 2023 Watermain and Street Improvement Project.

City Engineer Mark Bushnell said that they are doing a watermain and street project. On the street project, they are able to use our STU (Surface, Transportation, and Urban) money so 80% of the roadway improvements will be paid with federal funding.

MOTION

Alderson Stowe motioned approve Resolution 915 and Alderson Fischer seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Alderpersons Stowe, Bauer, Copple, Fischer, Huseman, Paulsen, Sherrod, and Stouffer voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

CONSIDERATIONS

A. Consideration of City Manager's Proposal to Dissolve the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) and Replace it with a Beautification Committee.

City Manager Michael Hall said this committee reviews signage and awnings. When a downtown business applies for a sign permit, the Community Development Department reviews for compliance before going to ARC to review before business moves forward. In sticking with being "business friendly", they are trying to cut down on the review process. They are proposing to eliminate that portion of the review. In regards of the Façade Grant program, he is proposing to change it to a "Beautification Committee" to expand the ability of this committee to do more and allow citizens to suggest public art, planters, signage, or anything that could beautify the community. Suggestions would be reviewed for compliance and brought to the council for approval of it including the financial part. The committee could get a lot of volunteers as Alderman Huseman has reported that the community would like to get more involved. This is a way to invite volunteers in, having the community involved and allowing it to expand. If the council is in favor, he will work with the city attorney to create the structure of the committee, so this is just a conceptual consideration. The mayor can unilaterally eliminate the ARC as it is an ad hoc committee but he felt it was best to bring it to everybody.

Alderman Huseman said what he likes about this is that the Comprehensive Plan has 50-60 things that citizens have said they wanted to see for example, more park benches. He likes the nature of this being proactive to begin checking off some of those things that residents have asked for but don't meet the requirement of a Façade Grant. Conceptually, this is a really smart thing to do. He asked that if the sign meets code but looks terrible, what can be done. There is language for the ARC making sure that there is cohesiveness with the downtown corridor.

Community Development Director John Sauter said the ARC, as it relates to signage downtown in the Conservation District, is advisory only meaning if the applicant comes to the committee who votes the sign down, that applicant can still put the sign up. If they are coming for a Façade Grant, that is different. For many years, there has only been one sign that was questioned. Basically, everything that comes before them gets approved because there is no clear direction or set of guidelines plus, there has been so much turn over on this committee. It's really slowing down the process for a simple sign permit, which takes about three weeks when it could take two or three days.

Alderman Stouffer said that is absolutely right as it's just another hurdle to get through so this will help streamline the process. He does want to keep the Façade grant to offer to the downtown but likes the proactive approach.

Alderman Stowe said that he is willing to give it a try as he thinks this committee was mainly put in for the Façade Grant program which they definitely want to continue to promote.

Alderman Fischer added that they need to be separate accounts but under the beautification committee so there are funds for Façade Grants.

Alderman Bauer said he likes the idea of expanding the responsibilities because beautification does a lot more than just architecture. There are a lot of things they can be and should be doing to make Sycamore an attractive place.

Alderman Huseman said that he would also like to see some standards built in to the committee, even advisory, that the types of projects are consistent with the Conservation District standards.

Alderpersons Paulsen and Sherrod concurred.

B. Consideration of a Recommendation from Public Works to Purchase a 2023 John Deere 544P 4WD Loader from West Side Tractor Sales of Rockford, Illinois in the Amount of \$185,964.74.

Public Works Director Matt Anderson said that this will replace the 1989 loader.

MOTION

Alderson Fischer motioned to approve the Consideration for \$185,964.74 to West Side Tractor Sales and Alderson Huseman seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Aldersons Stowe, Bauer, Copple, Fischer, Huseman, Paulsen, Sherrod, and Stouffer voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- C. Consideration of a Public Works Request for Approval to Purchase a 2023 Ford F550 4WD Snow Plow Truck from Lindco Equipment Sales of Merrillville, Indiana in an Amount Not to Exceed \$150,000.00.

Public Works Director Matt Anderson said that this one is very similar, as they are getting pricing from Source Well which sources pricing from all over. The price right now is \$138,638 but with supply chain issues and sourcing vehicles, this is Ford's price right now who has the ability to change that up until they deliver it to Lindco. Right now, the price is \$138,000. Rather than come back again, they are asking for the budgeted amount of \$150,000.

MOTION

Alderson Fischer motioned to approve the Consideration not to exceed \$150,000 to Lindco Equipment Sales and Alderson Paulsen seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Aldersons Stowe, Bauer, Copple, Fischer, Huseman, Paulsen, Sherrod, and Stouffer voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- D. Consideration Authorizing and Approving the Purchase of Water Meters and Radio Transmitters from Midwest Meter Inc. and Core & Main in an Amount Not to Exceed \$200,000.

City Manager Michael Hall said that the Water Division buys these meters throughout the year. Anything over \$20,000 must be brought to Council so they are asking for an open purchase order up to the budgeted \$200,000. This way, they can purchase them as they need them throughout the year as part of the normal purchase.

Public Works Director Matt Anderson added that warranty on meters start when they are manufactured not when we they receive them so this allows them to purchase \$50,000-\$60,000 worth to get them started allowing them not to hold a great surplus on the shelf. He said that this is the third year they have done this as \$200,000 is a one-year supply.

MOTION

Alderson Huseman motioned to approve the Consideration not to exceed \$200,000 to Midwest Meter Inc. and Core & Main and Alderson Stowe seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Aldersons Stowe, Bauer, Copple, Fischer, Huseman, Paulsen, Sherrod, and Stouffer voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- E. Consideration of Proposed Change to Council Meeting Start Time.

City Manager Michael Hall said that this comes from him and staff in asking the council to consider moving the meetings to 6:00 pm.

Alderman Bauer said he thinks the reason it was 7 o'clock is because people on the city council work. By the time you get out of your job, get a bite to eat, and get here, it is 7 o'clock. He said for the fairness of everybody and for them to come and watch their government in action, he thinks 7 o'clock is reasonable.

Alderman Stowe said it used to be 8 o'clock. He added that 7 pm meetings lends to more participation.

Alderman Huseman asked if it affected any Open Meetings Act rules.

Attorney Keith Foster said no, because the meetings are always published.

Aldersperson Copple disagreed and said that 6 o'clock would be perfect

Alderman Fisher suggested doing it at 6:30 pm.

Mayor Braser said that the only problem with changing it midterm like this is that if somebody on council cannot change to 6 o'clock, it's not fair. He thinks it should be changed at election time so they know up front that the meetings will be at 6 o'clock. He said that he appreciates all the input. They will keep it like it is and keep it out there and look at it again at the next election.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

APPOINTMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

Aldersperson Stowe motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 p.m. and Aldersperson Paulsen seconded the motion.

VOICE VOTE

Mayor Braser called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

Approve:

Mayor - Steve Braser

Attest:

City Clerk – Mary Kalk