



# City of SANDWICH, ILLINOIS

City Hall Annex • 128 East Railroad Street

## Committee-of-the-Whole Council Meeting

April 17, 2017 @ 7:00 PM

## MINUTES

Mayor Olson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

Roll call was taken:

**Present:** Mayor Olson, City Clerk Ii, Aldermen Dell, Fraser, Killey, McMahon, Redden & Robinson

**Also present:** Attorney Buick, Department of Public Works / City Engineer Horak, Chief Bianchi & EMA Director Ciciora

**Absent:** City Treasurer Webber

**Public Hearing** on City's tentative May 1, 2017 through April 30, 2018 Annual Budget:

**Motion made by Alderman McMahon, and seconded by Alderman Dell to open the Public Hearing on the City's tentative 2017-2018 Annual Budget. Aye: Aldermen Dell, Fraser, Killey, McMahon, Redden & Robinson Nay:0 Motion carried 6:0**

Explanation of the reasons for the budget and any proposed increase or decrease or additional or deleted programs: Mayor Olson noted that the newly passed 1% sales tax increase has been factored into the proposed budget creating a surplus in the City's coffers. Described as a 'living and breathing' budget, it will be subject to constant change throughout the fiscal year. Anticipated revenues are \$4,862,530 which is an increase of \$553,000.00 over the previous year. Unlike previous years, the new budget will provide a departmental narrative on the expenditures. This past year, a CD (Certificate of Deposit) ladder was created and will remain in place.

Persons describing to be heard with opportunity to present testimony and examine witnesses: None

**Motion made by Alderman Dell to close the public hearing. Motion was seconded by Alderman McMahon. Aye: Alderman Dell, Fraser, Killey, McMahon, Redden & Robinson Nay:0 Motion carried 6:0**

**Mayor Olson**

Progressive Energy Electrical Aggregation Update: Arnie Schramel, representing Progressive Energy, announced that ComEd electrical rates may increase and that there may be savings available affording the City the opportunity to resume its aggregation program. The initial program was discontinued in October, 2016, when the rates for ComEd fell lower than that offered by the aggregation program. Providing a savings can be realized, Mr. Schramel recommended that the City participate in a larger pool of municipalities which can further reduce rates. Additionally, the winning electrical supplier must offer a price match guarantee against ComEd's rates. This means that once a contract is in place, the supplier must provide flexible rates at the minimum or match those rates offered by ComEd. This language would be included in the contract with the new supplier. The Council expressed they would like to move forward with the program.

Discussion on City Survey: Mayor Olson shared findings on the recent residential survey. 466 completed surveys were returned, with 84.2% rating the City as good or an excellent place to live. Reasons cited were low crime rate, felt safe, friendly atmosphere, and small town environment. 76.9% felt the City should place a high priority on economic development to attract more businesses and franchised restaurants. 66.4% believed a priority should be placed on road and street maintenance; 57.4% would like more emphasis on public safety; and 55.7% want to see continued water and sewer system maintenance and repairs over the next two (2) years.

Discussion on City-Owned Property: There have been questions circulating regarding property owned by the City. In chronological order:

March, 2010 – The City purchased 5 acres at the end of West Hall Street for a proposed police station. Cost was \$25,000/acre. The property has never been engineered for improvements. This property is tax except for real estate taxes.

September, 2012 – The City purchased the building located at 207 E. Church Street for \$1 million as a proposed police station. There was no engineering, no cost studies, and no plans for modifications. In June, 2013, Heartland Bank agreed to accept \$20,000.00 from the City to withdraw from the contract to purchase. Reasons to withdraw were lack of parking, and the potential loss for retail use that would generate income as opposed to a tax-exempt police station.

June, 2013 – The City was led to believe that Corbin's, who sold the 5 acres located at the end of Hall Street, had a buy back agreement with the City. Upon further investigation with the Corbin's, and Attorneys Kramer and Paul, it was discovered there was no such agreement. Corbin's, however, did express interest in re-purchasing the property for \$8-9,000 per acre.

May, 2013 – The City purchased 26 acres on Center Street, between Fairwind Boulevard and Gletty Road, from First Merit Bank of Orland Park for \$40,000.00. There is an existing Annexation Agreement on that property stating that the first building permit on that property will owe the City in the vicinity of \$250,000.00. The city researched the property in anticipation of building a new police station at a cost of \$6-10 million. The plans were abandoned due to the exorbitant cost for the new construction. Currently, the City leases the property for agricultural purposes, and receives approximately \$13,986.00 in crop fees.

April, 2013 – The City purchased the property located at 302 S. Main Street with the intent of installing a parking lot. There has been no engineering conducted on the property, and the City purchased 55' of contiguous property in August, 2014. Alderman Dell acknowledged that the Council has a low priority on this project but admitted the City needs additional parking that would encourage business growth. He feels the concept is viable and would like to see the City pursue the project. Total investment expended on the project, including demolition of the existing house and garage, is under \$100,000.00.

March, 2016 - The City purchased the former Designed Stairs building located at 1251 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street. The City purchased the property for \$500,000 that included the empty lot to the east. The City is actively investigating the property as a future police station meeting with architects and construction engineers.

Budget Meeting: Council favored discussing the proposed budget at the end of the meeting.

**Foster, Buick, Conklin, Lundgren & Tritt, LLC**: Attorney Buick announced former DeKalb County Assistant State's Attorney, Carrie Thompson, has joined the firm

**City Clerk** reminded the Council that executive session minutes for the past year will need to be reviewed prior to next week. Clerk Li will be requesting a motion to approve said minutes, and further noted that such approval will not subject the minutes to be released to the public.

**City Treasurer**: Absent

**Director of Public Works / City Engineer Horak**:

Hydrant flushing will be the week of May 1<sup>st</sup>. This year hydrant flushing will be conducted for the full week.

Brush pickup was conducted in Ward 3.

Main Street Railroad Crossing Closure: BNSF (Burlington Northern Santa Fe) plans on closing the Main Street railroad crossing for a track replacement on Thursday and Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>.

Lisbon Street Project: Engineer Horak met with ComEd and Frontier this date. Discussed was moving the poles on the south side of the street to the 'island' located at either end of the parking area at Willow Crest and removal of the east pole on the north side of Lisbon Street. The west pole on the north side of Lisbon Street cannot be removed. Also on the north side of the Lisbon Street, the tree will be removed. Bid information will be forwarded to the paper for publication. Engineer Horak also reported that the City has received a deed from Willow Crest for the sidewalk replacement that has been forward to the City's attorneys.

Fox River Study Group will be conduct a presentation at the May 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. A letter will be presented to the Council at the time explaining the benefits of participating with the group.

Street Maintenance HMA: The soil borings have been completed. Engineer Horak expects to hear back this week on the extent of the repairs.

**Chief Bianchi** explained that with the start of the adjudication program, the City has been confronted with personal property issues. A draft for a proposed amendment to the Municipal Code was provided outlining the storage of vehicles on private or public property. The City's attorney is reviewing and will prepare an ordinance in the upcoming weeks.

**EMA Director Ciciora**: No report

**Alderman Dell**: No report

**Alderman Fraser**: No report

**Alderwoman Killey** advised that the finance committee will meet immediately following this evening's Committee-of-the-Whole meeting.

**Alderman McMahon**: No report

**Alderman Redden**: No report

**Alderman Robinson**: No report

**New Business**: None

**Audience Comments**: None

Council took a short break from 8:32 PM until 8:40 PM. Alderman Fraser returned to the meeting at 8:42 PM.

**Continued Discussion on 2017-2018 Budget:**

At a previous meeting, Alderwoman Killey submitted proposals totaling \$11,628.86 from Augustine Brothers and Mall Builders, Inc. for repairs and paint to the hallway and office area in the Opera House, and the purchase and installation of new window trim compliant to the Historic Registry requirements. She indicated that she would like the Opera House maintenance to be included in this year's budget. City Clerk Li advised that she had included the cost under her portion of the budget for building maintenance.

Discussion on additional staff was discussed for City Hall and public works. Engineer Horak proposed hiring a part time employee to mow from May through October at a cost of \$14.50/hour. He anticipates the job would entail 29 hours/week. City Clerk Li expressed a compromise of either a full time or part time replacement for the open accounting position. Michele Hoisington was a part time person that became a full-time employee in December when the accounting position became vacant. Her job description is solely payroll and accounts payable. When asked if Michele could move into the accounting position, Clerk Li was very emphatic that the position should be filled by a degreed accountant. With the right qualifications, the accounting position could be part time and could assist with covering the lunch hours. Currently the City Clerk is the only person handling foot traffic and telephones during lunch hours.

Mayor Olson wants to investigate investment options for approximately \$6 million in general funds. Although interest rates are not impressive at present, the excess money in the general fund is drawing no interest.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business to come before the Council, **motion made by Alderman Robinson and seconded by Alderman Redden to adjourn the Committee-of-the-Whole Council meeting at 9:48 PM. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

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Denise Li – City Clerk