

Fairfield, Illinois
Council Chambers, City Hall
Regular Meeting, 6:00 P.M.
Tuesday, July 23, 2024

Meeting called to order by Mayor Gary Moore at 6:00 P.M.

Prayer led by Doug Skaggs followed by the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

City Clerk Tina Hutchcraft called the roll:

Mayor: Gary Moore
City Clerk: Tina Hutchcraft
City Attorney: Darrin Rice
Aldermen: Terry Stahl; Allen Marsh; Sheryl Eckleberry; Eugene McGill; Bruce McKibben; Clifford Reever; Dewey Eckleberry; Cody Attebery

Also Present: Tom Mathews, Wayne County Press; Mark Wells, WFIW; Doug Skaggs; Ben Lewis, Assistant Police Chief; Andrew Miller, Fire Chief; Carroll Dugger, Cemetery; Kayla Warren; and other citizens from the community.

The minutes of the meeting of July 9, 2024, and bills of July 23, 2024 were sent out to those entitled to receive them. Mayor Moore asked for approval of the minutes for the July 9, 2024 meeting. Motion by Alderman Marsh, seconded by Alderman Stahl to approve the minutes of the meeting of July 9, 2024.

Vote yes: 8

Vote no: 0

Mayor Moore declared motion carried.

Mayor Moore asked if there were any corrections or objections to the bills for the July 23, 2024 meeting. Motion by Alderman Dewey Eckleberry, seconded by Alderman Attebery to approve the bills.

Vote yes: McKibben; Reever; Stahl; Attebery; Dewey Eckleberry; Sheryl Eckleberry; Marsh; McGill

Vote no: none

Mayor Moore declared motion carried.

Ordinance No. 24-0723-367/Appropriations – A public hearing was held at 5:50 p.m. concerning the annual appropriations. The total amount of the appropriations is \$27,047,727. This amount includes the general fund, motor fuel tax, TIF 1, TIF 2, Police Pension, and Fire Pension. The amount for just the general fund is \$23,966,450. A motion was made by Alderman Stahl, seconded by Alderman McKibben to approve Ordinance No. 24-0723-367 adopting the Fairfield Appropriation Ordinance for the fiscal year beginning May 1, 2024 and ending April 30, 2025.

Vote yes: Reever; Stahl; Attebery; Dewey Eckleberry; Sheryl Eckleberry; Marsh; McGill; McKibben

Vote no: none

Mayor Moore declared motion carried and Ordinance No. 24-0723-367 approved and duly adopted.

Resolution of Support and Commitment of Funds with Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission – A motion was made by Alderman Attebery, seconded by Alderman Sheryl Eckleberry to approve the resolution and commitment of funds with Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission. The annual fee is \$2,500.00.

Vote yes: Stahl; Attebery; Dewey Eckleberry; Sheryl Eckleberry; Marsh; McGill; McKibben; Reever

Vote no: none

Mayor Moore declared motion carried and Resolution No. 24-0723-512 approved and adopted.

Resolution Approving a Business District Redevelopment Agreement with Nikki Gray – Nikki Gray plans to open a restaurant called Smash and Dash and it will be located at 105 SW 6th Street. She has done a lot of work on this building to make it ADA compliant. She has asked for financial assistance from the Business District. The committee has met and they are recommending Council approve this request for \$10,000 for the new projects program. A motion was made by Alderman Reever, seconded by Alderman Stahl to approve the Business District Redevelopment Agreement with Nikki Gray in the total amount of \$10,000.

Vote yes: Attebery; Dewey Eckleberry; Sheryl Eckleberry; Marsh; McGill; McKibben; Reever; Stahl

Vote no: none

Mayor Moore declared motion carried and Resolution No. 24-0723-513 approved and adopted.

Resolution Approving a Business District Redevelopment Agreement with Chad and Melissa Musgrave – Chad and Melissa Musgrave own a business called Mama Bear's 4 Seasons Crafts & More. They have had problems with the exterior wall in the back of the building. They have completed the needed repairs and have asked for financial assistance from the Business District. The committee has met and they are recommending Council approve this request for \$5,000. A motion was made by Alderman Dewey Eckleberry, seconded by Alderman Marsh to approve the Business District Redevelopment Agreement with Chad and Melissa Musgrave in the total amount of \$5,000.

Vote yes: Dewey Eckleberry; Sheryl Eckleberry; Marsh; McGill; McKibben; Reever; Stahl; Attebery

Vote no: none

Mayor Moore declared motion carried and Resolution No. 24-0723-514 approved and adopted.

Creation of a Job for Water Distribution/Water Filtration – Several months ago our leadman at the water filtration department resigned. The City didn't have anyone that could take over that position because we didn't have anyone who had their Class A operators license. We ran several ads looking to hire someone, but we didn't find anyone willing to take the job. In order to stay in good graces with the EPA we hired Bill Young on a contractual basis and we paid him \$2,000 per month for his services in order to keep the plant in line with what is expected from the EPA. We now have an individual that took the Class A operators test and was successful in passing and is now a Class A operator. He currently works in the water distribution department and has no interest in moving to the filtration department. He is, however, willing to use his Class A

operators license to help the City out and has agreed to dedicate time to that department in order to fulfil the need there. Mayor Moore has had discussions with the local IBEW and they have agreed to a job creation that falls under the water distribution as a Class A operator/worker. The union agreed to allow this individual to spend time in both departments meeting the EPA requirements for the filtration plant and yet still work in the water distribution department. Mayor Moore would like to pay this individual \$30.31 which would be an increase of approximately \$1.69 above his current pay. We still need someone to serve as leadperson for the department and we are currently looking to make an appointment to that position. Bill Young's contractual agreement would be eliminated at the end of August. The creation of this position really doesn't need approval by the Council because it falls under the ability of the mayor to do that but we do have an ordinance in place that does require approval from the Council in order to increase anyone's pay. A motion was made by Alderman Attebery, seconded by Alderman Dewey Eckleberry to approve this job creation and pay increase for this individual.

Vote yes: Sheryl Eckleberry; Marsh; McGill; McKibben; Reever; Stahl; Attebery; Dewey Eckleberry

Vote no: none

Mayor Moore declared motion carried.

Miscellaneous – Mayor Moore stated that the City does everything we can to generate the revenues that we need. He feels that we are lacking in the area of collecting the uncollectible accounts in our utilities. At one time the City residents had to pay a deposit in order to get utilities. If you paid your utility bill 24 months in a row on time you would get that deposit money back. In 2013 we changed that to be a connection fee charge for each of our utilities instead of a deposit that would be returned. If a person has a good credit rating the cheaper the connection fees are. Those with bad credit, the higher the fee. We do send uncollected bills to a collection agency, but they have only collected about 8% of those bills that have been sent to them. We cannot collect on bills if it has been more than ten years. Mayor Moore stated that we might need to look at the connection fees and consider raising the fees for those whose credit is not good in order to recoup some of our money if a bill goes unpaid. Another thing we might look at doing is something Wayne-White Electric does. They have the ability to offer prepaid meters. The customer can swipe their credit card and put whatever amount of money they want toward their account and when that money runs out the lights go off. We might need to look into offering this kind of service to our customers. Mayor Moore asked the Council to think about ways the City can improve in this area.

Nuisances on Private Property -Alderman Dewey Eckleberry asked the Mayor or Attorney Rice to inform the public about the process of tall grass or nuisances on private property. The City cannot just enter a property and clean up a property. We must give a homeowner ten days notice to clean up the property before we can dispatch the Street & Bridge department to take care of the problem. The city police department can also issue citations through municipal court. The objective of municipal court is to get compliance with our ordinances and is not used to generate revenue. Alderman Eckleberry stated he just wants the community to know that we cannot just go in a clean up without proper notification. People get on social media complaining that the city is not doing anything about these properties but we as a government cannot just go on to someone else's property and do whatever we want. Sometimes it is very difficult to track down

who actually owns some of the properties within the city in order to make contact with them about the condition of the property.

Attorney Rice did state that he has a court date of July 31 on two nuisance properties and August 26 for another property so he hopes we will be able to begin the demolition of them soon.

Mayor Moore also stated that he would like Council to consider seeking bids for the demolition of our old power plant and our old filtration plant.

Miscellaneous – Mayor Moore told the Council that First Baptist Church each year requests a street closing for a portion of Douglas Street during the week of their vacation bible school. The bible school began Monday. The church mailed a letter requesting the closing the end of June and that letter was just delivered to city hall this Monday by the postal service. Mayor Moore gave them permission to go ahead and close the street for the safety of the children attending the bible school. He wanted the Council to be aware of the situation.

Adjourn Meeting – Motion by Alderman Dewey Eckleberry, seconded by Alderman Sheryl Eckleberry to adjourn the meeting.

Vote yes: 8

Vote no: 0

Mayor Moore declared meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Tina Hutchcraft, City Clerk

Gary Moore, Mayor