



City of Charleston, MO

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**City Council
January 10, 2023**

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Mayor Richard Toon. Also in attendance were Councilman Jackie Whiteside and Councilman Clark Dugan. Interim City Manager, Philip Halter, City Clerk, Ali Morris, City Attorney, Tabatha Graham, Chief of the Department of Public Safety, Robert Hearnese Jr., and Steve Myers from the local newspaper were also present.

Recognition of Visitors: Mike Mueller, Talisha Mays, Catie Austin, Sherry Austin, Jayne Ellen Ray, Ken Stevenson, Emily Deuster, Tim Meredith, and Jack Feezor were present.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes: Mayor Toon asked the council if they found any discrepancies within the two sets of minutes from the previous month. Both Councilmen present said they did not.

A motion was made by Councilman Whiteside to approve the minutes from the December 13, 2022, meeting and from the December 19, 2022, Special Call Meeting. Councilman Dugan seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Report of City Business: Interim City Manager, Philip Halter, began his report by giving an update regarding the park renovations. He explained that gaps in the concrete were left intentionally at AD Simpson and Charles Williams Park for the pavilions and restrooms that were supposed to have been delivered in December. We are now hoping they arrive in January. Mr. Halter explained that it was decided to asphalt the area at AD Simpson rather than put down the rubber material. The Public Works Department will asphalt that area sometime in the Spring. Mr. Halter then mentioned there has been a lot of cleaning up of trees and shrubs at AD Simpson Park on the West side due to people setting up camp in that area. Gene's Tree Service has been cleaning up the trees and debris.

Mr. Halter then acknowledged that he attended a MORCEA meeting in Union City, Tennessee and they elected Amber Childers at this year's chairwoman.

At this time, Mr. Halter explained that our John Deere tractor completely stopped working early in December, which set our leaf collection behind schedule. Thanks to David Harris, we were able to get a new John Deere tractor the day before we had the bad weather. We then used it as a snowplow. We placed the old John Deere tractor up for bid. The highest bid was \$7,600, and that money was deposited into the park fund.

Next, the Interim City Manager announced that the Subway restaurant, which was in the Charleston Plaza building, closed unexpectedly. Mr. Halter explained that he attempted to contact Mr. Bill

Mays, who was managing the property, but found out that Mr. Mays had passed away. Mr. Halter then said he did speak to Kim Whorton, who is helping manage the property, and she informed him that they intend on auctioning off the property within the next few months.

Mr. Halter pointed out that during the few days of freezing temperatures, we had twenty-eight (28) homes reported with frozen pipes within a two-day period over the holiday weekend. Most of them are repaired and back up and working.

At this time, Mayor Toon asked Mr. Halter if he was at liberty to discuss the prospect of a recycling plant coming to town. Mr. Halter said that topic would be on the report for next month, but that the prospects have been looking at the old concrete plant, located on South 5th Street. It is owned by SEMO Real Estate, but apparently, they are no longer in business, and we have had difficulties tracking down the actual owner(s). Councilman Whiteside asked how many the plant would potentially hire. Mr. Halter said approximately 10-15 people. Mr. Halter also mentioned he may go visit the prospects' facility if and when the project gets closer to development. They would need 4-5 acres for the plant, and the old concrete location is 4.39 acres.

Mr. Halter said there were a couple of interviews conducted for the City Manager position in December, but that would be discussed later in the closed session.

The Interim City Manager then made reference to the financial report included in the council packets. We are still running under budget for the most part. There was also a list in the packet of expenses paid during the month of December that were over \$5,000. There were two large expenses, which were previously approved by the council. One was for the new John Deere tractor, and the other was for the new Department of Public Safety Tahoe.

The Public Works Report was referred to, in which it reported we replaced two (2) high speed service pumps at the water plant. They are still working to replace a part and are waiting for it to arrive.

The Code Enforcement Report was then mentioned. Mr. Halter added that we towed one car in December and are working to tow more and clean up the streets in that regard. There are three (3) houses in town that are in the condemnation process at this time. One is on N Locust, one on S Finney, and another one on Boone Ave. Mayor Toon asked if there was a lot of documentation on these properties and Mr. Halter replied, yes, there is. Liens are placed on the properties if we must tear the houses down ourselves. Councilman Dugan asked if we would get that money back that we pay to have the properties torn down. City Attorney, Tabatha Graham explained that the lien goes against the property, not the homeowner. Councilman Dugan explained that Illinois has a different process and Mr. Halter said we may investigate that.

The monthly Police Report was brought to attention. Mr. Halter stated that the Chief of Police was present if anyone had any questions. Mayor Toon asked the Chief if he had any news on where we stand on getting license plate readers. Chief Hearnese replied that he has a meeting scheduled for this coming Thursday with the company to discuss where they would be installing the equipment. He also stated that this meeting and software would be for both the license plate readers and the gun shot detection technology. Mayor Toon asked if the technology would distinguish between a firework and a gun shot. Chief Hearnese said he was unsure at this time and would find out more in the meeting.

Old Business: Mayor Toon wanted to get the Council's approval of the appointees for the CLG (Certified Local Government) Board. He named off who he chose to serve on the board: Sherry

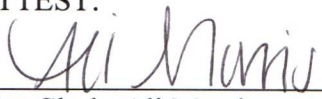
Austin, Terri K Wilmurth, Tom Graham, Kenny Hulshoff, and Rodney Jones. No one was opposed to any of the appointees.

New Business: Emily Duester and Tim Meredith from Century 21 were on the agenda to discuss rental property inspection guidelines. Mrs. Duester explained that as a realtor with Century 21, and the President of the Bootheel Regional Board of Realtors, she has had a lot of experience with investors. Some want to buy and flip properties, while others plan to buy and rent. Mrs. Deuster then went on to explain from recent conversations with Charleston residents, she has gathered that some feel that owning and renting properties in Charleston can be a little more difficult compared to other towns. She then stated that she knows some property owners have sold their properties due to the inspection criteria required by the City. Mrs. Deuster suggested that the criteria may need to be reevaluated. She also said that she works with a lot of appraisers, and they can have strict criteria, but Charleston's seems to be even more advanced than the appraisers. Mr. Halter asked if she could provide him with a list of adjusted criteria based off what she believes to be fair. Mrs. Duester said of course. She then directed attention to her broker, Tim Meredith. Mr. Meredith stated that he does a lot of business in small communities, and it seems that the upkeep criteria is enforced more on rental properties than on actual owned homes. A lot of times the same issues can be found on homeowners' properties right next door to a rental property, but they are not pressed to fix the same issues. Mr. Halter explained that we experience a lot of turnover with rental properties and the only way to know that a person moved out sometimes, is because the new tenant will contact us about setting up a water account. Mayor Toon asked if Mrs. Deuster and Mr. Meredith were given copies of our guidelines and ordinance. They said they were. Councilman Whiteside added that several years ago, a committee was formed of rental property owners/landlords, and they set the criteria that they wanted to go by. He explained that the landlords set the rules, and the council governed. Councilman Whiteside also pointed out that there are always those homeowners who take pride in their property, and expect the same from their tenants, but there are also "slumlords" who have properties with unlivable conditions. Mr. Meredith said he understood and that the goal is to keep properties in the best condition as possible, and that we all have the same goal in mind. Mrs. Deuster closed by stating that with people moving to town for jobs such as teaching positions or working for the prison, it would be a benefit to have more rental properties available.

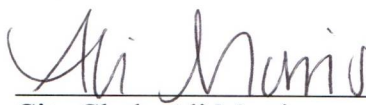
Next on the agenda, Mr. Halter pointed out that as he was expecting to go back to his seat on the city council, there was only one open seat coming up for the election. However, he will not be available to fulfill the remainder of his term at this time, which opens a second spot. There will now be one seat for a full, three (3) year term, and another for the remainder of Mr. Halter's term, being two (2) years. Mr. Halter explained that the last date to file for council election is January 17th, and if anyone plans on running, they must notify the City Clerk of which term they wish to run for.

Adjourn: Councilman Dugan made a motion to close the regular session meeting and go into closed session. Councilman Whiteside seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

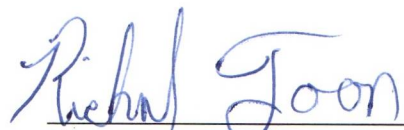
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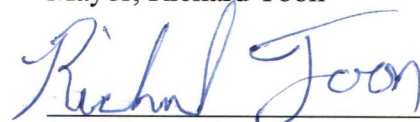
City Clerk, Ali Morris



City Clerk, Ali Morris



Mayor, Richard Toon



Presiding Officer, Richard Toon