



**City of Charleston, MO**

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**City Council  
November 15, 2022**

**Meeting Minutes**

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

**Recognition of Visitors:** Mike Mueller, Terri K. Wilmurth, Joe Lane, Talisha Mays, Jayne Ellen Ray, Sheila Shankle, Catie Austin, and Lester Gillespie were present.

Jayne Ellen Ray spoke on behalf of CHARM, informing everyone that the area that has been revitalized between two businesses on Main Street, has officially been named "Main Street Park", and they plan on having a ribbon cutting very soon. Jayne Ellen also mentioned that they will be selling personalized, engraved bricks to fill the front two sections of the park. They do not have prices set yet but will be putting all the information out as soon as possible.

Jayne Ellen Ray then mentioned that the Christmas Tree Lighting will take place on the lot beside the Post Office, on December 1<sup>st</sup>, at 6:00PM. A choir may be there, along with other entertainment. CHARM will also be hosting other events that they will post on their Facebook page, including caroling, midnight madness, and a cookie eating contest. They are also hosting a Christmas Bazaar which will take place on December 3<sup>rd</sup> from 10AM-2PM with various vendors.

At this time, Mr. Joe Lane spoke up, stating that he has been a property owner/landlord in Charleston for many, many years. He owns some property on South Grand and mentioned that the area's drainage issues have worsened. Interim City Manager, Philip Halter, told Mr. Lane that the city is working on getting a grant to work on several streets with the same issues. Mr. Lane said that he just wanted to bring the issue to attention so that when it comes time to work on the next budget, hopefully this area could be acknowledged. Councilman Whiteside asked Mr. Lane how long this has been an issue with the street. Mr. Lane replied that he has owned rental property there since 1999 and that the city has cleared it out several times, but it continues to clog. Terri K. Wilmurth spoke up and noted that behind her florist business, at East Market and Citizens Bank also has an issue with flooding. Sheila Shankle also said that Naomi Street appears to be caving in or looks like it is sinking. Mr. Halter said that work needs to be done on all drainage ditches.

Mayor Toon asked Mr. Mike Mueller would like to speak about how his Community Market went. Mr. Mueller said, "we survived", and that the wind was brutal one weekend, so the market was cancelled. Mr. Mueller mentioned that he handed out questionnaires, asking about times, location, vendors, etc., and would report back once all the information has been accumulated. He then said that he was encouraged to keep hosting the Market, as the vendors were happy with their sales, and several people attended, even if they did not make any purchases. Mayor Toon said it looked like a fair amount of people showed up and he looks

forward to seeing Mr. Mueller there next year. Lastly, Mr. Mueller said that if people were unable to be there, that he recommended they go onto Facebook and see the looks on the kids' faces as they participated in the pie eating contest.

**Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:** Mayor Toon called for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 11th, 2022, meeting, the Closed Session Minutes of the October 11th, 2022, meeting, and the Special Call meeting minutes from October 18th, 2022. A motion was made by Councilman Whiteside to approve all minutes. Councilman Farmer seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

**Report of City Business / Operations:** Interim City Manager, Philip Halter provided a written report as part of the meeting packet and began by stating that the city has received a total of 23 applications for the City Manager position. Five applicants have been interviewed, but most have taken jobs elsewhere. Mr. Halter mentioned he posted the job on Illinois' Municipal League website and has been working with someone from Manpower to help find someone. Mr. Halter said there are currently six openings for city manager positions on the Illinois Municipal League website.

Mr. Halter then informed that we should be hearing something this week regarding the status on the water grant we have applied for. However, the wastewater side is taking longer for some reason.

At this time, Mr. Halter mentioned the numbers and benefits on the new health insurance are looking good and said he would speak more on the subject later.

Mr. Halter stated that our Fall Cleanup went seemingly well, as nine dumpsters were filled up.

He then mentioned that the new water and sewer rates were reflected in the bills mailed out on October 31<sup>st</sup>, and that unfortunately it seemed like many were lost in transit and were delivered much later than normal.

Mr. Halter acknowledged the trailer that the city had up for bid. He explained the highest bid was in the amount of \$3,000 and was deposited into the Park Fund.

The Hotel/Motel tax was collected on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce and CHARM. This was for two quarters, and the funds were distributed accordingly.

Mr. Halter then spoke about attending the Bootheel Regional meeting and his discussion with Donnie Brown, who was just elected as State Representative. He explained that Mr. Brown will be proposing a Bill in hopes to use diesel fuel tax money to pay police officers' salaries.

The Interim City Manager then recalled a meeting with our current computer software system, United Systems, and explained to the council that we feel it is the right time to upgrade our software to make it better and run more efficiently. Mr. Halter then went on to explain that in hopes of receiving grant money to replace water meters in the future, the software system would work with us on implementing that as well. This would allow for complete monitoring of flow and would make meter readings way more accurate. Mr. Halter then stated that it would cost approximately \$3,000 per month to upgrade, but this would do away with most third parties we are currently paying and combine everything under one umbrella. Mr. Halter explained that the City Clerk, Ali Morris, would be attending a users' conference the following day, and would return with more information.

Mr. Halter then mentioned the city received the current years' financial statement, and it was submitted to the State on our behalf by our auditor.

At this time, Mr. Halter informed that the new park playground equipment would be installed very soon, and that grid-work would be taking place to go underneath the equipment, which would be safer to fall on than concrete. Mayor Toon asked if the company we purchased the equipment from were going to install it, and

Mr. Halter said yes. Mr. Halter also mentioned that the restrooms were going to come prefabricated and would be set by crane trucks.

Mr. Halter then pointed out the list of bills paid over \$5,000 in the month of October, which was included in the packet. He noted that the expense for the asphalt sealcoating was on the list, and that the job had been completed.

He then stated that we are still on budget and that interest rates have gone up, so we are beginning to accrue some within the CDs. Mr. Halter then stated that we should obviously see an increase in tax revenue during December. He also mentioned that the Park Fund is always the one running low, and often transfers have to be made in order to keep that particular account in the green.

At this time, the Chief of Department of Public Safety, Robert Hearnese, Jr., addressed the council by stating that his department is falling behind on technological advancements. Some of which include license plate readers, which would potentially provide a record of vehicles in an area after a crime is committed. Also, gunshot detection would report a precise location to the police department, rather than relying on residents to call in and officers continue to scramble to find the correct location. Chief Hearnese then went on to explain the company he has been in contact with, also provides applications for cell phones, which would offer a better, more efficient way to get important information out to the public. He also mentioned the app would be very similar to the one provided by the Sheriff's department. Interim City Manager, Philip Halter, said that this would be looked into further come budget deliberating time.

The Public Works report was mentioned. Mr. Halter acknowledged the 24 catch basins that were vacuumed on 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Matthews, and Grand Ave. He explained that is also why we vacuum the leaves, to prevent build up.

The Code Enforcement Officer, Ken Stevenson, reported to have collected \$305.00 worth of business licenses in October. At this time, a visitor, Talisha Mays spoke up and asked what code enforcement is doing about overgrown yards and junk, because she filed complaints during the summer months and has not seen anything happen. Mr. Halter explained to her that we are not allowed to go onto private property, so that hinders us from mowing anything ourselves. The City Attorney, Tabatha Graham, explained to Mays that the code enforcement position is just now back up and running after being out of operation for quite some time. She reassured that more tickets will be written, and even prosecuting some of the offenders is in the works.

**Old Business:** Mayor Toon moved on to the first agenda item under Old Business, Bill NO. 3917, Ordinance NO. 3058-An ordinance amending Chapter 400 of the City Code of Charleston, with the purpose to establish the City of Charleston as a certified local government (CLG) in the state of Missouri. As this has been discussed at several meetings this year, and the Code amendment has already been written and approved, the council agreed to approve the ordinance and move forward. Councilman Dugan made a motion to approve the ordinance. Councilman Farmer seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed. Mayor Toon then stated that he has spoken to several people already and would like to recommend five individuals to serve on the CLG board. Sherry Austin, Terri K. Wilmurth, Kenny Hulshoff, and Tom Graham were mentioned. Mr. Toon then said he would like for one councilman to serve on the board as well. Councilman Clark Dugan volunteered.

Next under Old Business, Mr. Halter gave further information on the new health insurance for city employees. He explained to the council that HIC Insurance Agency, Inc., is going to save the city some money, which will also save employees ten dollars per pay period. Along with the new health coverage, employees will also have dental and vision coverage, along with a \$50,000 life insurance policy. A motion was made by Councilman Whiteside to approve the new health insurance policy. Councilman Farmer seconded the motion. The motion carried.

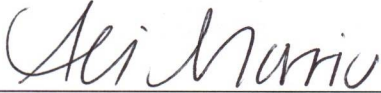
**New Business:** Bill NO. 3916, Ordinance NO. 3057- An ordinance for a general election to be conducted on April 4, 2023, for the purpose of electing one councilman-at-large. Mayor, Richard Toon's term is up in April. Councilman Whiteside made a motion to approve the ordinance. Councilman Dugan seconded the motion. The motion carried.

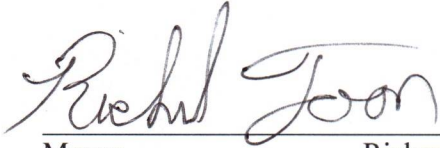
Next under New Business, was Resolution 1104- A resolution stating intent to seek funding through the community development block grant program (CDBG). Interim City Manager, Philip Halter explained this is part of the process to be able to improve the drainage on the West end of town. Getting this resolution approved is the first step. Mr. Halter then explained that he and Public Works Director, David Harris had already ranked the audited engineering companies for the project. Councilman Dugan made a motion to approve the resolution. Councilman Farmer seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

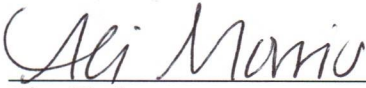
The last item on the agenda was to discuss annual training enhancement bonuses for all city employees. Mr. Halter explained that \$300 to full-time, and \$100 to part-time has been given for several years in a row. Due to inflation, unfortunately that doesn't go very far. All members of the council decided that \$500 to full-time, and \$250 to part-time was fair. A motion was made by Councilman Whiteside to approve the bonus amounts. Councilman Farmer seconded the motion. The motion carried.

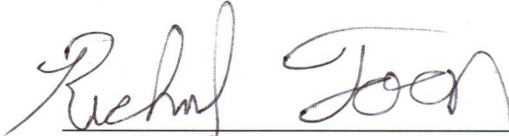
**Adjournment:** A motion was made by Councilman Whiteside to adjourn the open session meeting in order to go into closed session. Councilman Dugan seconded the motion. The motion passed and the open session meeting was closed.

Attest:

  
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City Clerk Ali Morris

  
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Mayor Richard Toon

  
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City Clerk Ali Morris

  
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Presiding Officer Richard Toon