



CITY OF CHARLESTON

City Council Meeting

July 16, 2024

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Mayor Rick Toon at 6:30PM. Councilman Jackie Whiteside, Councilwoman Cedrica Polk, Councilman Jason Oliver, Councilwoman Monica Goodin, City Manager, Greg Luehmann, Public Works Director, David Harris, Chief of Department of Public Safety, Robert Hearnese Jr., Public Safety Officer, Brooks Brockmire, and Public Safety Officer, Austin Henson were present. City Attorney, Tabatha Graham was absent. City Clerk, Ali Morris phoned in for the meeting.

Consideration of Prior Meeting Minutes: Before a motion was made to approve the previous meeting minutes, Councilwoman Goodin questioned where the city stood on the storm siren grant. The city manager explained that we could go ahead and apply for the grant, but it is uncertain whether the funding will be received this year or next year if we are approved. Goodin suggested there be some type of alert for storms that people could sign up for. Mayor Toon said that the Sheriff's Department offers a text alert and Chief Hearnese said that the National Weather service sends out automatic alerts. Goodin suggested the city run an article in the newspaper to help communicate with the citizens on how to download the apps in order to receive the alerts. Goodin said it would be nice to put out different options and let people know what the apps look like. She said this protects us and the city needs to be diligent to inform people.

Goodin then questioned the proposal of the asphalt project that was discussed and approved during the June meeting. She asked if they could pave the entrance into Small's Lumber. Councilman Whiteside explained that the property owner must pave it the first time and then they can dedicate it to the city for them to maintain.

A motion was made by Councilman Oliver to approve the minutes from the June 11, 2024, meeting. Councilwoman Polk seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried and the minutes were approved.

Report of City Business: City Manager, Greg Luehmann began his report by stating he attended a ceremony at the courthouse in honor of Mr. Arthur Cassell. The city presented him with a plaque.

It was mentioned that City Hall received Business Yard of the Month last month.

The city manager said he met with Chris Roberts with Cape Electrical and discussed the possibility of installing charging stations for electric cars in Charleston. Potential locations for the stations were discussed. Mayor Toon suggested they speak to Boomland and Pilot. The city

manager said they would continue to look into the stations and would discuss further once more information is available.

The city manager said he spoke with Christy Wilson of Horner Shifrin Engineering and the update on the lead service survey was that there were 501 remaining homes that they were unable to get into. They will try again, but they have inspected enough to meet the October deadline.

The city manager met with grant writer, Mitzi Dell to discuss the CDBG drainage project grant. A public hearing is scheduled for July 22nd at 5:30PM at City Hall.

It was mentioned that a concerned citizen called to voice concern about the burning of a wheat field. The fire department was dispatched to put out the fire of a light pole.

Mr. Luehmann then gave an update on the homeless individuals. They were made to vacate the property they were staying on and the public works department cleaned up the area. The stray dogs are now off the street as well.

Discover Nature Day was held at Whipple Park with over 300 in attendance. There were five or six different stations set up as well as a fish fry. Luehmann said he discussed a grant for potential fishing docks at Whipple Park with Salvador Mundragon.

The city manager explained that he talked with iWorQ Systems about software to use for code enforcement and permits. This will be discussed later on the agenda.

Mr. Luehmann mentioned that a concerned citizen called and asked for assistance with mowing the ditch near her home and the Bowden Center. The Public Works Department mowed the area and the citizen was pleasantly surprised.

There were no questions about the monthly financials, the public works report, the code enforcement report, or the public safety report.

Old Business: The only item of old business was to discuss the vacant building registration. Mayor Toon reminded everyone that the draft of the registration that was discussed last month had the amount set at \$200 for residential properties. Councilman Oliver stated that he felt that \$100 for residential properties and \$200 for commercial properties sounded fair to him. Mayor Toon said he agreed, and that the city clerk was working on preparing the registration forms. If property owners fail to pay the registration fee, the fee will be added onto their property tax. The city manager said he felt they were headed in the right direction and will discuss again at the next council meeting.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Polk to set the residential yearly registration amount at \$100 and the commercial property amount at \$200.

Councilman Oliver seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried and the registration amounts were approved.

New Business: The first item of new business was consideration of **Bill NO. 3955 / Ordinance NO. 3096 – An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Charleston, Missouri Concerning Acceptance and Compliance with Various Requirements to Obtain Financial Assistance from**

United States of America, Acting Through the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development. The city manager explained that passing this ordinance was part of the process of the grant application for the storm sirens. A motion was made by Councilman Whiteside to approve Bill NO. 3955 / Ordinance NO. 3096. Councilwoman Goodin seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried and the ordinance was approved.

The next item of new business was to discuss the proposed drainage project. The city manager explained that cost matching would be necessary to improve the city's odds of receiving grant funding. It is a way to gain more points. If the city puts in 20% of the cost, there is a better chance of being awarded the grant. A motion was made by Councilwoman Goodin to approve the city's 20% cost match. Councilman Whiteside seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried and the 20% cost match was approved.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss a master equity lease agreement for the Department of Public Safety vehicles. Mr. Luehmann stated that the city spent a lot of money on DPS vehicles in the last fiscal year. He said if the city were to participate in this program, there could be a five-year lease with payments rather than purchasing all at once. They work with municipalities and go off of bids. He said that the city would ease into this, and he is not planning on leasing anything at the moment. The council would still have to approve the lease agreement(s). Councilman Whiteside asked Chief Hearnese what his thoughts were on the program. Hearnese said it was a good program and there is a long list of organizations and municipalities that participate in the program. A motion was made by Councilman Oliver to participate in the program. Councilwoman Polk seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried and the city agreed to participate in the lease program.

The next item of new business was to discuss the iWorQ software that could potentially be used for code enforcement and permits. The city manager explained that he spoke with the code enforcement officer for the city of East Prairie and Morehouse who has about 30-40 years of experience and who currently uses the software. The city manager explained that the city of Charleston is currently using a handwritten method of operation. The cost would be \$7500 for the first year, which includes training, and then would cost \$4500 per year after the initial cost. Mr. Luehmann said the documentation process looked amazing and that the software could also be used by the animal control officer. Councilwoman Goodin asked if this could be used for the documentation of the vacant building registration. Mr. Luehmann said yes, that was the plan. Pictures can be automatically uploaded as well as the city's ordinances when issuing violation letters. Luehmann said he planned on being very hands on with the software and that the code enforcement officer for East Prairie/Morehouse volunteered to help with training. The software would provide a process from start to finish. Councilman Whiteside asked what would happen if we decided we did not like the software and want to get out of the contract. Mr. Luehmann said it is a three-year contract and then we would not have to renew it after that if we did not want. A motion was made by Councilman Whiteside to approve the purchase of the iWorQ software. Councilwoman Goodin seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried and the entering into a contract with iWorQ for software was approved.

Recognition of Visitors: Joe Lane, Talisha Mays, Raymond Ivy, Cal Coleman, Kenny Hulshof, Mike Owens, Tiffany Shankle, and Sheila Shankle were in attendance. Mayor Toon said that before he allowed any visitors their three minutes to speak, he wanted to remind them that the city manager is in the office five days a week and before any concerns were brought to the council, they needed to give the city manager an opportunity to address their concerns. He said if their concerns were not addressed in a timely manner, then they could address the council.

At this time, Councilman Oliver reminded Mayor Toon that there were other items left to discuss on the agenda. Mayor Toon said he forgot he added the next three items but one of them was no longer needed. He said Mr. Tom Graham resigned from the Charleston Historic Preservation and Commission Board and Toon wanted to appoint Mr. Larry Smith to take his place. Mr. Smith has a background in construction and Mayor Toon felt like he would be a good fit. A motion was made by Councilman Whiteside to appoint Larry Smith to the Charleston Historic Preservation and Commission Board. Councilman Oliver seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried and Larry Smith was appointed to the CHPC board to fulfill Mr. Tom Graham's term.

Mayor Toon then asked how many people attended the Fourth of July event at AD Simpson Park that was hosted by the First Assembly of God Church. Mayor Toon said he attended the event and was very impressed. The Church sent the city a letter of appreciation for the help provided by the Public Works Department. Toon then stated he would like for the city to present a plaque to the First Assembly of God Church for all their effort. They will also be hosting a Christmas event on December 14th and 15th.

Councilwoman Polk asked why the other agenda item was skipped over. Mayor Toon said it was regarding a fundraiser event for the McCutchen Theatre but that the event was cancelled or postponed.

It was stated by many that they were unaware of the scheduled event and Councilwoman Goodin suggested the city consider investing in a marquee or something to set up to notify people of such events.

Joe Lane asked about the status of the drainage grant project. The city manager said the public meeting regarding the grant would be held at City Hall on July 22nd at 5PM. Mr. Lane wanted to make sure certain areas were still going to be addressed within the project. Mr. Luehmann explained that the city needs the community's support to hopefully be awarded the grant. Councilman Oliver explained that it will be documented in the grant proposal how many people show up for the public hearing who voice their concerns. The more that show up, the better. Raymond Ivy spoke and said he has lived on the Southwest side of town for 28 years and whether the community shows up or not, the city knows about the drainage issues. Councilwoman Polk explained that the city is competing with other towns for the funding, and it is necessary to have the community show up to support the need.

Mike Owens mentioned that other cities like Sikeston have portable message boards that they move around to announce events, and the city may want to look into something like that.

Cal Coleman addressed the council and explained a recent interaction he had with some of the police officers. Coleman did not have a pleasant experience and feels that there should be an advisory board to oversee the police department and hold them accountable. Mayor Toon said he appreciated what Mr. Coleman had to say and asked if he had spoken to the city manager about his concerns. Coleman said yes. Mayor Toon said he would give Mr. Coleman his phone number and they could set up a meeting to discuss his concerns further.

Kenny Hulshof addressed the council and mentioned that the city of Dexter has a portable Doppler system and there are some great grants for such. Mr. Hulshof also mentioned that he owns a couple of vacant buildings in town and the city could work with the Chamber of Commerce to try and recruit businesses. He suggested they look at the existing city ordinances and make sure they are consistent with what the city is hoping to accomplish. Hulshof then mentioned it may be time to consider hiring an economic development person. He suggested finding out about possible meetings that could be attended and look into the promotion of the town economy.

Talisha Mays mentioned that there are several city boards and most of them do not meet. Mays said these meetings should be open to the community and the community should be aware of them. Mayor Toon said the meetings are not private. Mays said there may be possible grant money out there to help benefit the city in multiple areas, but if the boards are not meeting, they may be missing out on those opportunities.

Kenny Hulshof said the city and community needs to go out and recruit businesses rather than waiting on people to start knocking on our door to come to town.

Councilwoman Polk agreed and said, "who is going to ask about something they don't know about?"

Mayor Toon said every six months, the boards need to meet and give the public an opportunity to voice concerns.

Tiffany Shankle expressed concern regarding the vacant building process. She said it is very scary knowing that she has put so much money into her property. Mayor Toon said he and Tiffany needed to meet on Friday and set up a meeting with Economic Development.

Mr. Raymond Ivy said he wanted to give confirmation of the concern of the police department and the citizens. He agreed with Mr. Coleman's suggestion of a city review board.

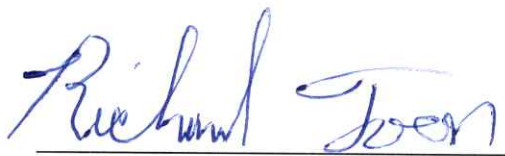
Chamber of Commerce Director, Todd Clodfelter said they need to promote, build, and unify the community. He said Charleston is unique and that the Chamber supports the concept of working with Economic Development and he just wanted everyone to know that he offered support.

Adjourn: A motion was made by Councilwoman Goodin to adjourn the regular session and go into closed session. Councilwoman Polk seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried and the regular session was adjourned.

ATTEST:



City Clerk



Presiding Officer

Ali Morris
City Clerk

Richard Toen
Mayor