



## **CITY OF CHARLESTON**

204 NORTH MAIN STREET  
CHARLESTON, MO 63834

### **City Council Meeting March 13, 2023**

#### **Meeting Minutes**

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM by Mayor Richard Toon. Also in attendance were Mayor Pro Tem, Patrick Farmer and Councilman, Jackie Whiteside. Councilman Clark Dugan was absent. City Manager, Philip Halter, City Clerk, Ali Morris, and Chief of the Department of Public Safety, Robert E. Hearn Jr., were also present.

**Recognition of Visitors:** Talisha Mays and Yarian Rodgers were present.

**Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:** A motion was made by Councilman Farmer to approve the minutes from the February 14, 2023, Council Meeting, and from the February 23, 2023, Special Call Meeting. Councilman Jackie Whiteside seconded the motion. The motion passed and the minutes were approved.

**Report of City Business:** City Manager Philip Halter addressed that a correction needed to be made on the second page, that the city is still responsible for \$44,159.60 for the CDBG project.

Mr. Halter then explained that he met with Chris Dugan, Rick Toon, and Mike Mueller in regard to 4-H garden plots in town. He said that after the discussion it was decided to move forward with the plots and the vegetation will be available at local markets soon.

Mayor Toon asked if there was any news regarding the tornado warning sirens that were mentioned in the report. Mr. Halter explained that these particular sirens in Louisiana are from a nuclear power plant and that if they decide to get rid of them, the government may enforce that they put them out for bid. Mr. Halter explained that his contact with the sirens is actually from Charleston and has family here so they may be able to touch base with her again soon.

Chief Hearnese asked Mayor Toon if he would like for him to get bids on sirens again. Mayor Toon expressed that it isn't a big deal because most people are unable to hear them from inside their homes anyway, and there are text alerts now. Everyone discussed that there is a "dead zone" where the old sirens could not be heard, and that if we do ever install new ones, that needs to be taken into account. Mayor Toon said yes, he would like for Chief Hearnese to get bids.

City Manager, Philip Halter then mentioned that three houses are currently being demolished. One homeowner agreed to pay the city back for the demolition costs.

Mr. Halter explained that Rich Cochran is waiting for video from Visu-Sewer to make sure they lined the sewer lines here in town correctly. The project has taken a lot longer than expected. Rich Cochran also discussed the lead project and grant with Mr. Halter and Public Works Director, David Harris. This is also on the agenda to explain further.

A public forum will be held to "Meet the Candidates" who are running for the upcoming city council seats election. It will be held at the Clara Drinkwater Newman Auditorium at the High School on March 28<sup>th</sup> and all candidates have agreed to be there.

Mr. Halter encouraged everyone to drive around and look at all of the work that has been completed on the park projects. He explained that the sidewalks around the ball field at AD Simpson are to help keep water off of the field and eventually it will be asphalted up to the sidewalk.

Mr. Halter met with Reggie Young, Hudson Byrd, and David Harris to discuss potential work at the other parks that weren't within the current project. We anticipate another significant amount to be donated and will hopefully use it at Hillhouse for the whiffle ball field.

Councilman Whiteside asked if there was any update on locating property for Wickliffe Recycling to start a business in town. Mr. Halter explained that there were some conversations had with both Bill McNeary for his property behind the prison, and with Clifford Rolwing regarding Wallace Reeves' property behind Boomland. Reeves is definitely not willing to sell the property but would be willing to lease it. McNeary on the other hand, would like to sell all of his property behind the prison, which is a little more than what is needed for the recycling business.

Mayor Toon asked City Manager, Philip Halter if there was any update on the ammonia problem at the lagoon. He asked if he had spoken to anyone about the bugs that eat the ammonia during the warmer months and if there is anything we can do. Mr. Halter said no, there isn't really an update, but we are still looking into it.

Mr. Halter said that he would like to set up a special call meeting with the council so that Rich Cochran can come and explain the process of lead testing and how it will affect everyone in town. As we need to submit a new proposal for the grant funds to help with the projects, we

need to get ourselves in position and have a chance to get an ordinance written. The council agreed that Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5PM would be good for them. We are currently in violation of DNR on lead, and the violations will most likely continue in the near future as there will be phosphorus and nitrogen testing. The lead testing project will take a lot of time and we at least need to show that we are making an effort.

At this time, Mr. Halter asked City Clerk, Ali Morris, to explain the new water bills. There was a copy of a mockup bill in the council packets. The bills will now be printed on a full sheet of paper and mailed in envelopes rather than the postcards that have been used for years. There is a link on the bills for the new payment portal where residents can sign up for paperless billing and for text alerts.

Mr. Halter then addressed the new park signs. The one at Rolwing Park has been mounted and looks great. The other parks aren't ready yet. We are hoping to have the restrooms for Charles Williams Park the week of March 27<sup>th</sup> and then concrete work will begin, along with the spongy material that will go under the playground equipment.

In regard to the bills paid in the month of February, Mr. Halter explained that we paid Kagmo Electric Motor Company for the blower motor that went out about six months ago. It was installed the same day it was received. Public Works Director, David Harris, is working on putting in new valves at the water plant and is still waiting for fourteen of them to come in. He is still waiting for twenty stainless steel bolts to arrive as well.

At this time, City Manager, Philip Halter referred to the budget numbers. He stated that the city is in pretty good shape other than within the transportation budget. A lot of vehicles were paid off within the fiscal year, along with some major, necessary purchases that were not budgeted for. Therefore, an amended budget will need to be passed before we propose the upcoming fiscal year's budget. Councilman Farmer asked if the new DPS vehicles were in. Mr. Halter explained that the new Tahoe has been in for a while, and we just purchased a used state patrol car last week. Mr. Halter stated that he has already budgeted for two new patrol vehicles in the upcoming fiscal year.

The Department of Public Works report was referenced. The storm sewer work on Grand has been completed after installing 200 ft of new lining. Everything is draining well.

The Code Enforcement report showed that five cars are in the process of being towed. Letters have been going out in hopes of getting some properties cleaned up.

The Department of Public Safety report was reviewed. Mr. Halter explained that this version of report is more detailed than what is published in the local newspaper.

Mr. Halter told the council that we have brought in less sales tax money than budgeted and anticipated. However, the new Wayfair tax is helping with that.

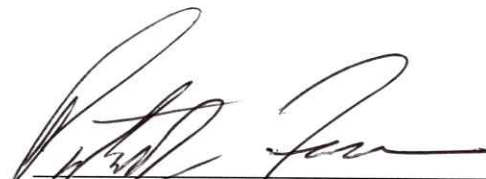
**Old Business:** The first item under old business was already discussed. The second item on the agenda was to discuss lead testing. City Manager, Philip Halter explained that all pipes at every location of residence in Charleston will have to be identified. There is a new software available for smart phones called "Diamond Maps" that will show each line, what it is for, and will also show if there are any leaks or issues. Every house/building will have to be checked. Although there was a lead ban after 1986 when building a new structure, the pipes will still have to be identified. We are unable to know what lies from the shut off valve to the house. This will require some digging. Councilman Whiteside asked if residents will be required to pay for replacement pipes if theirs happen to contain lead. Mr. Halter explained that he has no idea what the government will do about that situation. There may be funding. As of right now, DNR is telling us what we have to do. There is a lot of data to be collected and we are required to attempt to complete the survey by October 2024. We are hoping the county will help determine the years that structures were built. A lot of time and energy will go into this project. The Diamond Maps App will cost \$45.00 per month and all of public works will be able to utilize it. We have been given \$200,000 in grant funding to use toward this project as of now. A lot of cities are hiring outside help to complete this, but we feel that our public works department are the most knowledgeable and would have to be of help to anyone we were to hire.

**New Business:** Mr. Halter stated that as it is very difficult to bring new businesses into Charleston, this company would like to be hired to bring in new people. The company, "Make My Move" collects data from cities to present criteria for people who work remotely from home who are looking to move. The agreement would be to pay them \$42,000 and they would find five individuals who would move to Charleston. The council agreed that Charleston is a town with lower costs of living, but it is unlikely that we would ever recoup that money back. Mr. Halter said that he understood their concerns and we would table this at this time.

**Adjourn:** Councilman Whiteside made a motion to close the meeting and go into closed session. Councilman Farmer seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:33PM.

ATTEST:

  
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City Clerk

  
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Mayor

  
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City Clerk

  
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Mayor