

MINUTE RECORD
Regular Council Meeting City of Haven

Meeting: REGULAR

Date: November 16, 2009

THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING IN REGULAR SESSION WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:00 PM BY CODY R. LITTLESTAR, MAYOR WITH THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Council Member: Jeff Stringer

Council Member: John Mitchell

Council Member: Paula Scott

Council Member: Amy Hirst

ABSENT: Council member, Don Ford.

Others: Sonia Yutzy, Leslie Warden, Allen Blake, and Allen Andresen.

No additions to the agenda were requested, and no public comment was provided.

Plans for Christmas Party:

To date, nothing had been said about an employee Christmas party. City Clerk, Leslie Warden, expressed that she thought most employees would rather have a small Christmas bonus than a Christmas party. City Administrator Allen Blake said that we should have one anyway, and the Council seemed to agree. Jerry from Haven Foodliner is supposed to be turning in a bid to cater the party. The Council suggested Warden make the plans and decide what to have Jerry serve. The party will take place at the Community Building on December 7, 2009, at 7:00 PM following a brief council meeting. Warden will send out invitations and request RSVPs. She will also be responsible for decorating and providing "knick knacks" that are reasonably priced.

Christmas Bonuses for Full-time Employees:

Lengthy discussion ensued regarding Christmas bonuses. Council member Paula Scott said that we need to do a better job of combining pay and benefits as a compensation package so that it is easier to get a one-time picture of what is being spent. Council member John Mitchell began inquiring about health insurance premiums and whether or not they will increase next year.

Council member Paula Scott said she felt like the City may have to consider putting caps on how much of the insurance premium they will pay, that they may no longer be able to pay 100% of the insurance premiums. She noted that she has clerks working for her at the state that make only \$8.00 per hour and pay for their own insurance. Council member Jeff Stringer said he would find a different job if he were in that position. Ultimately, Scott said she would not support both a Christmas bonus and a cost of living raise.

Various ideas were thrown out as to how a Christmas bonus should be provided. Scott suggested the Christmas bonus be provided in gift certificates that could be spent at any business in Haven. Paying bonuses this way, she noted, would make giving the employees a Christmas bonus more easily defensible. Council member Stringer said that as an employee he would much prefer to have \$100 cash in his pocket than gift certificates.

The discussion then migrated to the topic of raises and increasing costs of healthcare coverage. Mayor Littlestar commented that the decision on raises might be affected by how much insurance premiums increase next year. Scott said she did not want to couple raises and healthcare coverage because ultimately the Council could decide to provide both or neither. Council member Amy Hirst stressed the importance of shopping around for the most cost-efficient insurance rates. City administrator Allen Blake advised the Council they could move raises to a different part of the year. Also, he shopped around for insurance rates last year and didn't find much, but he would do more shopping around this year. The Council agreed to defer the decision regarding raises and healthcare until they have received information about what insurance rates are going to do in 2010. Blake noted that we probably wouldn't have those numbers until mid-February or March.

Scott's Christmas bonus idea prevailed. She moved that the City provide all full-time employees with a \$200 Christmas bonus to be issued in \$20 increments of gift certificates to be spent at Haven-area businesses. Stringer seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Blake said he would hold an employee meeting this week regarding raises, healthcare coverage, and the Christmas bonus.

Maintenance Updates:

Allen Andresen, Maintenance Supervisor, presented updates to the Council.

- The recycle trailer was placed in service on November 3, 2009, and it has been emptied five times since then. The paper and plastic bins seem to fill up quickly. The City Council was pleased with the usage. Mayor Littlestar suggested if usage follows the same trend that the trailer should be altered to hold more paper and plastic. The City is on a waiting list for another trailer. State Surplus does not have any more at this time.

- Three cement pads for park benches have been poured for the Park Board. One was vandalized the night it was poured. Andresen advised he would grind and putty it. The four benches that were ordered should be in by Wednesday and will hopefully be set by the holiday weekend.
- Jim Daugherty contacted Andresen about some of the City's sewer pipe he saw laying near the railroad tracks. He would like to purchase it. It was agreed the City would take sealed bids on the pipe because it is not being used.
- Right now Andresen is waiting on parts for the street sweeper. Once the parts are in, it will take a full day to re-assemble it.
- The Deutz-Allis tractor has been in the shop. The seal on the right side was leaking water into the brakes. The seal was replaced. However, the other side was starting to leak as well so it too was replaced. It should be ready to go by Wednesday.
- Andresen spoke to Johnny Schmidt about the snow blade that was thought to have been on order. Apparently, he never ordered it but has done so now.
- Andresen advised he will be gone for the next three of five weeks on vacation. He will be leaving on November 30th.
- Mayor Littlestar asked Andresen to fix the clock in the Council chambers and repair / replace the faded Yield sign at 4th and Emporia.
- Council member Jeff Stringer asked Andresen to repair the leaning Stop sign at west Main and frontage road.
- Council member John Mitchell asked that Andresen make reparations to the rutty alley between Hutchinson and Reno.
- Mayor Littlestar asked if Andresen would be interested in selling the large salt spreader and buying one that mounts on a hitch. Stringer said if we aren't going to use the salt spreader we have, then we should get rid of it. Littlestar pointed out that a mountable salt spreader would be less cantankerous and easier to store. Andresen said it would allow him to better control the amount of salt he uses. Littlestar said the mountable ones cost between \$1500 and \$2500. All agreed they would take bids on the salt spreader.

City Administrator Updates:

City Administrator Allen Blake advised that he attended the last Planning Commission meeting, and the City Building Inspector did attend. They discussed Home Occupations.

The Paul Moore Estate is nearly done. They are finishing the paperwork, and because real estate is involved, they will have to publish.

We just received final approval on our seepage test. The engineer said we could go ahead and use it.

In regards to the water project, Phillip Fishburn got the environmental impact statement sent to all the necessary state agencies. He has already received back a few minor changes.

Demolishing 120 N. Kansas Avenue:

Council agreed to take bids to demolish 120 N. Kansas Avenue.

Personnel: Performance Evaluations

Blake asked the Council if they would like to go ahead and review the performance evaluations even though they have decided to hold off on any raises. Stringer said yes, and Mayor Littlestar thought that would be good. Stringer moved that the Council enter into a 45-minute executive session regarding personnel. Mitchell seconded, and the motion passed four to zero.

At 9:00 PM, regular session resumed with no action taken during executive session. Mitchell then moved for the termination of Ryan McCrory. Jeff Stringer seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Acquisition of Real Estate

Amy Hirst moved that the council enter into a 10-minute executive session to discuss the acquisition of real estate. John Mitchell seconded, and the motion passed four to zero. At 9:10 PM, Council resumed regular session with no action taken during executive session. Amy Hirst moved to allow Council member John Mitchell to bid on behalf of the City on the property at 216 N. Topeka. Jeff Stringer seconded, and the motion passed four to zero.

Minutes:

Minutes from the November 2, 2009, council meeting were approved by a motion from Paula Scott and a second by John Mitchell. The motion passed four to zero.

Accounts Payable:

Paula Scott moved for the approval of the accounts payable, totaling \$103,338.16; Mitchell seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Council members were provided a comparison of expenditures compared to the 2009 budget for the month ended October 31, 2009.

Council Concerns:

It was mentioned that Don Ford had hip surgery today. Council member Amy Hirst reported that he is doing well.

The Council received a thank you card from Sturdi-Bilt and a letter of appreciation from Brownie Troop #188.

Council member Amy Hirst asked if anyone had taken a look at the previously mentioned window at the library. Blake said he did go look at it and it just needs a new board. The board that's there has rotted. Hirst also inquired, because she herself has received the inquiry, why the police don't pull more people over on Haven Buhler Road. Blake said that most of the tickets issued in the City are issued there, but more leeway is given there than on city streets because of the high speed limit.

Blake asked the Council what they would like to do with the pay of City Clerk, Leslie Warden, and Refuse Hauler, Rick Ehrlich, the employees coming off probation. Typically, if performance has been satisfactory, employees coming off probation are given a raise. The Council agreed they would provide those employees with a \$.50 raise effective at the first of 2010. Blake pointed out that those pay rates would have to be changed by Ordinance and Resolution respectively. He said he would draft those for Council approval at the next meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding Dewayne Palmatier's pay, which is currently \$8.50 per hour. Stringer had previously communicated that Palmatier has not received a raise in a very long time. Mayor Littlestar said he would consider raising Palmatier's pay to \$9.50 at most but felt more comfortable at \$9.00. Mitchell suggested a compromise of the two at \$9.25. Scott asked why he needed a raise now and said we need to establish a system to evaluate employee raises. She suggested the decision on a raise be made at the same time raises are decided on for everyone else.

Blake asked the Council if they wanted to implement a system to incrementally raise utility rates over the years to prevent sudden jumps in rates. The Council thought that was a good idea.

It was also decided that the open maintenance position would be advertised in The Clarion.

Adjournment:

At 9:40 PM, Stringer moved for adjournment. Scott seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Cody R. Littlestar, Mayor

Leslie Warden, City Clerk