

**CITY OF WILLARD  
BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
REGULAR MEETING  
December 27, 2023  
6:00 p.m.**

Staff present: Interim City Administrator Donna Stewart, Project Engineer Steve Bodenhamer, Director of Finance Carolyn Halverson, and City Clerk Dona Slater

No City Attorney was present.

Citizens in attendance: Megan Applegate, Angie Wilson, Steve Cobb, Cody Sherman, Lena Hammond, Larry Whitman, Marta Mize, Stephanie Evans, and Michael Wodtke.

**Call to Order.**

Mayor Baird called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Roll Call.**

The City Clerk conducted the Roll Call.

Alderman Smith-present; Alderman Hall-present; Alderman Biellier-present; Alderman Lancaster-present; Alderman Keene-present; Mayor Baird-present. Alderman Swatosh-not present.

**Agenda Amendments/Agenda Approval.**

Ms. Donna Stewart requested removing agenda items #6 and #12 and amending item #9 to include “and Technical Planning Committee”.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Hall to approve the modified agenda. Motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Smith, Biellier, Lancaster, Hall, and Keene.

**Consent Agenda.**

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Lancaster to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Biellier, Smith, Hall, Lancaster, and Keene.

**Discussion/Vote on current Outstanding Invoices, Draft and Check Paid Invoices for November/December 2023.**

Motion was made by Alderman Lancaster and seconded by Alderman Hall to approve the current outstanding invoices, and draft and check paid invoices for November, and December 2023. Motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Smith, Biellier, Lancaster, Hall, and Keene.

**Citizen Input.**

Stephanie Evans – 605 Daniel Ln – She said she was disappointed that the Board of Aldermen did not vote to waive Sunshine Request fees at a previous meeting. She said that a previous alderman and mayor pleaded guilty to stealing \$300,000 from his employer and she feels the City should have submitted bank statements for state review without a Sunshine request. She said many citizens are concerned about the City’s recent hiring and firing practices. She asked what job seeker sites the City advertised on. She said many people in Willard believe there was a lack of effort and advertising to hire a City Administrator.

Steve Cobb – 603 Main – He said he would like the City to support the multi-state bike route. This will go through Willard. He would like to see the City promote the Frisco Highline Trail more.

Megan Applegate – 721 Colby St – She said the Board accepted the agenda from the City Administrator about rate increases. Not all water customers live in the City. She asked why did the City not send letters to

citizens about the proposed rate increases? She wants more effort to collaborate with citizens and businesses. She feels the City needs to find ways to be inclusive for all citizens. She feels the December 11, 2023, meeting was not transparent.

Angie Wilson – 107 Ridgeview Dr – She read comments on behalf of Cindy Oakham who is wondering where the City's money goes. Now the City wants to raise rates. Ms. Wilson would like to see something written on the utility bills about the rate increases.

Mike Wodtke – owner of Washboard Laundry – He said he doesn't live in Willard, but his business is in the city. He said twenty-five cents of every load of laundry goes to pay for water and sewer. He thinks it is time to think about having our own treatment plant. He said a ten percent (10 %) increase in water and sewer rates is not a huge amount, but the City didn't notify customers.

#### **Discussion/Vote to hire a City Attorney and Prosecutor**

Ms. Stewart said the Board of Aldermen has interviewed two candidates for City Attorney. Willard's City Code states the mayor has the power to appoint a City Attorney, but she would like input from the Aldermen. Mayor Baird said they interviewed candidates from Lauber Law and Reynolds and Gold Law firms. He said after they pick the candidate, they can negotiate rates. He advises keeping the Attorney and Prosecutor at the same firm. Alderman Lancaster recommends Lauber Law due to their experience in Municipal laws. Alderman Biellier feels Jake Spindler of Reynolds and Gold has less experience.

Motion was made by Alderman Lancaster and seconded by Alderman Smith to hire Lauber Law firm for City Attorney and Prosecutor.

Motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Smith, Biellier, Keene, Lancaster, and Hall.

#### **Discussion/Vote on revised Job Description for Planning and Zoning Director**

Ms. Stewart said the City has struggled to find a Planning and Zoning Director. She has a large folder of unqualified applicants from Indeed. There have only been two candidates with experience in the field or related field. The biggest changes to the description are education and experience requirements. She also changed the general purpose of the position.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Keene to formally adopt the changes to the job description for the Planning and Zoning Director.

Motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Smith, Biellier, Lancaster, Hall, and Keene.

#### **Discussion/Vote on assigning a Voting member, Alternate member, and Technical Planning Committee to Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO)**

Ms. Stewart said the Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO) helps coordinate funding. Our voting members are no longer with the City and new members need to be appointed. Mr. Bodenhamer said generally the mayor is a voting member. The voting alternate is usually the City Administrator when the mayor can't attend meetings. He said the Technical Committee can't hold both OTO and Technical Committee. This will be brought back at a later meeting. Ms. Stewart requested a vote for the mayor to be assigned as a voting member and the City Administrator to be assigned as the Alternate member to the Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO).

Motion was made by Alderman Biellier and seconded by Alderman Smith to assign the Mayor as a voting member and the City Administrator as the Alternate member to the Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO).

Motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Lancaster, Biellier, Hall, Keene, and Smith.

#### **Discussion/Vote of City/mayoral support of a multi-state bike route through Willard, Missouri**

Ms. Stewart said a multi-state bike route from Louisiana to Iowa will incorporate the Frisco Highline Trail through Willard. There is no cost to the City for this.

Motion was made by Alderman Hall and seconded by Alderman Smith to approve the support of a multi-state bike route through Willard, Missouri.

Motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Hall, Smith, Lancaster, Biellier, and Keene.

**Declaration of Surplus Vehicle for the Police Department. Discussion/Vote**

- a. 2013 Dodge Charger VIN 2C3CDXAT6DH721481
- b. 2017 Ford Explorer VIN IFM5K8AROHGC26131
- c. 2019 Dodge Charger VIN 2C3CDXAGXKH644968
- d. 2020 Dodge Charger VIN 2C3CDXAG5LH111413

Ms. Halverson said these are high mileage vehicles and the City would like to sell these through Enterprise.

Motion was made by Alderman Lancaster and seconded by Alderman Biellier to declare these vehicles as surplus and to sell them through Enterprise.

Motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Keene, Hall, Lancaster, Smith, and Biellier.

**Ordinance accepting the proposed 2024 Budget. (2<sup>nd</sup> Read) Discussion/Vote**

Ms. Halverson said nothing has changed since the first read of the Ordinance at the last Board of Aldermen meeting.

The second read was conducted by the City Clerk.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Hall to accept the proposed 2024 Budget.

Motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Smith, Hall, Biellier, Keene, and Lancaster.

**Public Hearing on increasing Sewer rates.**

Mayor Baird opened the Public Hearing at 6:55 p.m.

No one wished to speak.

Mayor Baird closed the Public Hearing at 6:56 p.m.

**Ordinance increasing Sewer Rates. (1<sup>st</sup> Read) Discussion/Vote**

Ms. Stewart said Springfield increased their charge to the City of Willard in July 2023 and will raise the charge each year for the next three years. Maintenance costs have increased. The City has lost money on sewer for the last two years. The City needs to build back the sewer reserve funds. She said rate studies will be done in the coming months. Alderman Lancaster questioned the rate studies being done in-house. She suggested using an engineering firm or group to do the studies. She does not agree with a ten percent (10%) increase now and another increase later in the spring. She prefers one large increase after a rate study and to go five (5) years out. Alderman Hall agrees we need rate studies but that we also need to increase rates ten percent (10%) now. The consensus of the Board is City Hall needs to put out a letter to customers about rate increases since citizens feel they have not been notified adequately.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Biellier to postpone the first read of the Ordinance until the January 8, 2024, Board of Aldermen meeting.

Motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Keene, Hall, Lancaster, Biellier, and Smith.

**Public Hearing on Increasing Water Rates.**

Mayor Baird opened the Public Hearing at 7:29 p.m.

Angie Wilson – 107 Ridgeview Dr. – said we have many ways to communicate with customers and to not monkey with words.

Larry Whitman – 508 Pine – said he presumes this discussion will be similar to the sewer rate increase discussion. He would like to see the City explore rate studies to be done by the Missouri Rural Water Association (MRWA) or an independent firm instead of doing them in-house. He encourages the Board to approve the first read of the Ordinance tonight because any increase will be at least ten percent (10%).

Mike Wodtke – owner of Washboard Laundry – said the increase from the City of Springfield is a given. The Board of Aldermen need to speak with their constituents and let them know Springfield is going to increase their rate to Willard and let them know we have to do this. He said customers don't know their sewage goes to Springfield to be treated.

Cody Sherman – 712 Daniel Ln. – said all citizens understand increases. He thinks the City needs a more organized approach to letting customers know about the increases.

Mayor Baird closed the Public Hearing at 7:37 p.m.

#### **Ordinance increasing Water Rates. (1st Read) Discussion/Vote**

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Biellier to postpone the first reading of the Ordinance until the January 8, 2024, Board of Aldermen meeting.

Motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Smith, Hall, Keene, Lancaster, and Biellier.

#### **Jackson Street Project Update**

Mr. Bodenhamer said we have clarified the consultant selection process with the Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT) utilizing their on-call consultants list. Justin Sorgen, Public Works Director, has been named the Local Public Agent.

#### **Discussion/Vote to approve a Work Authorization to CJW, Inc. for Engineering of the Jackson Street Overlay**

Mr. Bodenhamer said this Work Authorization is for the engineering of the Jackson Street Overlay.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Hall to approve the Work Authorization to CJW, Inc. for Engineering of the Jackson Street Overlay.

Motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Keene, Biellier, Lancaster, Hall, and Smith.

#### **Sanitary System Projects Status Report**

Mr. Bodenhamer said Allgeier, Martin, and Associates are continuing design work and materials availability investigations. They began field survey work in December. We still need to work on Civil Rights Compliance. We are exploring dividing this project into two phases. We are in the process of pursuing easement discussions with landowners for the best routing of the gravity sewer to connect the Meadows to Springfield.

#### **New Business**

Ms. Stewart said they need a Special Session to interview for the Planning and Zoning Director. The consensus of the Board is to add this to the agenda for the January 8, 2024, meeting. Mayor Baird wants a consensus on water and sewer rate studies. Mr. Bodenhamer said the Missouri Rural Water Association (MRWA) promotes rate studies as part of membership. He said Cochran Engineering does on call services. Ms. Stewart said to reach out to them for a timeframe and costs.

#### **Unfinished Business**

Alderman Lancaster has been reviewing the budget and has requested a breakdown from Jason Knight for the Parks department. Mayor Baird said, in an effort to relieve stress to staff, board members need to respond to emails for attendance at meetings. Alderman Smith commented that the Public Works building looks nice.

#### **Adjourn Meeting**

Motion was made by Alderman Hall and seconded by Alderman Smith to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Smith, Hall, Biellier, Keene, and Lancaster.

The meeting Adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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Dona Slater, City Clerk

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Sam Baird, Mayor

