

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS  
MARCH 1, 2023

Charles City city council met in a planning session on March 1, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. in council chambers. Mayor Dean Andrews presided and the following council members were present: Keith Starr (via phone), Patrick Lumley, Delaine Freeseman, Phoebe Pittman and Phillip Knighten. Also present were city administrator Steve Diers, city attorney Brad Sloter and engineer in training Brian Sullivan.

Mayor Andrews thanked the council for agreeing to meet earlier on Wednesdays during the month of March.

Tyler and Ashley Robbins were present to discuss with council about allowing chickens to be raised in city limits. They had given council information on other cities ordinances on chickens and asked if council would consider changing our ordinance to allow chickens. Council voiced some concerns over possible odor or other nuisance issues with chickens. Staff was directed to draft up a proposal for the next planning session for council to discuss further.

City attorney Sloter visited with council on what their direction might concerning the Summit pipeline. Several counties that are in the line of this pipeline have either changed their zoning to address this or have filed objections to the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB). Sloter doesn't know of any cities that have filed anything like this, only counties. Floyd County board of supervisors have retained outside council and are objecting to this pipeline with the IUB. Councilmember Freeseman stated that he would like to have a definitive answer on the safety of this pipeline, he doesn't feel we've gotten that yet. Other concerns with how this would affect the certified site marketability. ADC has been in contact with the IUB with that same concern about the certified site but have not come to a decision on what to do just yet. There is already a gas pipeline easement going through the north side of the site, some concern over this pipeline going along side it and making an even bigger easement area. We have been told that a parking lot could be constructed over both of these pipelines but any other possible construction could possibly still be constrained if the pipeline easement is too large. Mayor Andrews was not in favor of the city retaining outside counsel just yet, would be too costly and most of the council agreed with him. Staff will continue to monitor the proceedings on this pipeline at the state level and we will just sit tight for now.

Street superintendent Cory Spieker was present to discuss replacing the current vac truck with a new one. The current one is a 2012 model. The purchase price is \$612,039.36 and would be split over two fiscal years. The cost will be split between sewer (50%), streets (25%) and water (25%). A local contractor is interested in purchasing the old one for \$150,000. Staff did contact a business that does sewer vac services and hiring them to do this for us would cost a lot more than doing it ourselves. This will be on the next regular agenda for council action.

Water superintendent Cory Spieker reviewed his recommendation to purchase a generator for the high pressure distribution system. This portion of the system includes Croell, the hospital, Zoetis and Cambrex. If we would happen to lose power, we would need this generator to keep water service to these businesses and others. This would be a portable generator so could be used elsewhere in the city if needed. Spieker budgeted \$85,000 for this for FY24 and the quote he's received back is approximately \$90,000. This item will be on the next regular agenda for council consideration.

Spieker also discussed plugging well #4, which is located at 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue and F Street. The condition of this well is deteriorating pretty quickly. It was constructed in 1939 and is very deep. It can only be used in an emergency and then can only be operated for 24 hours. It would be very costly to get it up to proper standards so Spieker is recommending plugging it. He has received a quote from Northway for this service for \$50,000. This item will be on the next regular agenda for council consideration.

Parking regulations in the 100 and 200 blocks of Main Street were discussed. Parking limits here were recently set to 90 minutes and there have been several complaints from businesses located here. A couple of them say that their clients appointments could be longer than 90 minutes and they did not want them to get a ticket. One owner also has the only handicap accessible entrance on the front and some of their clientele would not be able to park in back and walk around the front for their longer appointments. Mark Wicks has done a survey of the downtown business owners and their preferences for a length of time for parking was varied. Police chief Hugh Anderson commented that during the day, the parking tickets are mostly complaint driven. At night, the officers keep a closer watch on cars parked there. There have been several tickets written already and quite a few warnings given. Much council discussion on what time length would be the best to enforce. It was stated that it would be very helpful if the business owners and their employees would park in the back and leave the Main Street parking for customers. The issue with making it 3 hour parking is if the police are notified, the 3 hour limit starts when they observe the car there. So if the car had been there for 3 hours already, it would be another 3 hours before they would issue the ticket. Consensus of council was to leave it at the 90 minutes for now, give it a chance for

the community to become aware of this limit and abide by it. Council member Freeseaman asked for information on the numbers of tickets and warnings given after the next few months to be reported back to council.

The city has been approached by the Upper Cedar watershed group about sharing in a coordinator position for that entity. They want to determine how many of the entities involved would want to share in this, whether it be just by participation or funding. Council would like more information, such as how many entities would be involved, what the cost is anticipated to be for this coordinator position and what the responsibilities for this position would be. Consensus of council was we are interested in this and would like more information.

A possible increase in traffic ticket fines was discussed. Chief Anderson has done research to see what other communities charge. We are currently at \$15 and it does not seem to be much of a detriment since we write quite a few tickets. Staff is proposing increasing to \$25 for all parking tickets, including snow tickets. Council agrees that the price should go up, there is a lot of administrative time involved in processing the tickets. Discussion on having the snow tickets be higher since we seem to have a lot of repeat offenders with those tickets in particular. Staff is looking for some direction on how to draft this ordinance to be presented to the council for consideration. After much discussion, consensus was to make the regular parking tickets \$25 and the snow tickets \$50. This ordinance will be drafted and brought back to council at a future meeting for consideration.

City administrator Steve Diers has shared an updated levy sheet after we got the changed valuations due to the recently passed state legislation. In order to retain the tax receipts needed, the levy will raise to \$16.53 from the original projected \$16.36. The current year levy is \$16.20. With the decrease in valuations implemented by the state, we had to increase the levy to maintain the level of taxes required. There is an ambulance meeting scheduled for March 9. We recently received a very large increase in the request from AMR to continue to provide ambulance service from \$200,000 to \$415,000. The equalization bed at the wastewater treatment plant has recently performed exactly as it was planned when a large piece of ice sheared off the top of a manhole located at R Campground. This allowed flood water to pour into the plant but the equalization bed kept us from having to shut down the plant and re direct the sewage directly into the river. That was very good news.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.

Dean Andrews, Mayor

Attest:

Trudy O'Donnell, City Clerk