

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS  
MARCH 15, 2023

Charles City city council met in a planning session on March 15, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in council chambers. Mayor Dean Andrews presided and the following council members were present: Keith Starr, Patrick Lumley, DeLaine Freeseman and Phillip Knighten (via Zoom due to illness). Absent was Phoebe Pittman. Also present were city administrator Steve Diers and city engineer John Fallis.

Mayor Andrews commented that the disaster symposium in Des Moines would cover for a portion of NIMS training for council. If interested in attending this symposium, please contact him.

Discussion held on allowing chickens in the city limits. The code currently allows for chickens in town with special permission from the council. In the past when we have allowed them, they have been located on the edge of town. City administrator Diers had contacted several of his colleagues about their rules for chickens. Some had started to allow them but then rescinded it, mostly due to them becoming a nuisance situation. Those that allowed them had a common maximum of 6. Council member Lumley commented that his concerns on allowing were as follows: we currently have no animal control in place, so this would fall on our code enforcement department probably, the egg prices should be dropping at some point and if we allow chickens, will requests for other livestock follow? Council member Knighten stated that if enforcement falls to our code department, they are stretched pretty thin already with other nuisances. If we don't have the manpower to police this, it would allow them to become a nuisance much more quickly. He has received several phone calls from citizens concerned over allowing them. He is not in favor of allowing chickens. Councilmember Starr commented that he was also concerned over these home flocks spreading viruses and that is a larger concern for Pure Prairie Poultry currently operating in the city. He is also worried about the neighbors of these home flocks, could be a nuisance pretty quickly. Councilmember Freeseman's biggest concern is the smell caused by the chickens. Citizen Tyler Robbins spoke again in favor of allowing this. Connie Parson spoke against allowing, citing the effect it may have on real estate values if there is a nuisance issue with them, such as odor. Diers stated that we could leave the code as it is. Freeseman commented that this has worked pretty well so far and allows the council a little bit of latitude. Consensus was to leave the code as it is.

Lance Aldrich from Fox Strand reviewed the final pay request for the WRRF project. He is still waiting on the warranty for the roof and EQ basin owner manual for some equipment. Since these are very minor, we can go ahead and accept the project at the next regular meeting. We will hold the final payment for 30 days after acceptance and at the end of that, if we haven't received the items listed above, we can continue to hold the payment until they are received. However, if we do that, we will be responsible for paying interest on that final payment amount. Wastewater superintendent Dan Rimrod has requested a couple of other items be installed and these will be done as a separate project from the original one.

A Façade application from Burrito Mexpress has been submitted for some new signage. They are located within the Hot Shots building at 700 Riverside. Total estimated cost of the project is \$3200 and they are requesting 50% of that, which is \$1600, for this grant. Signage will be placed on the north and south sides **of the building**. **Mark Wicks remarked that we have used up all of the Façade funding for this year but we** are able to utilize unused cultural/entertainment funding as needed. There were drawings submitted for one of the signs but not both. Design committee has reviewed this application and is recommending funding. This item will be on the next regular council meeting for consideration.

Carol Frye and Christopher Anthony, representing the historic preservation commission, gave a report on the activities of the commission the past year as required by the certified local government program. They have built a new website and designed a new logo. They are also working on implementing QR codes for area historic buildings so visitors can get more information on the building. They have also added student advisors to their board to get young people involved in the city's history.

The proposed Mill Race parking project was reviewed. Design drawings had been distributed to the council. We would be utilizing sponsored project dollars for this project. This project will provide quite a few more parking spaces that are currently in this area and will be especially beneficial to the residents of the Union House apartment building. City staff have met with the local businesses in this area about this

project and the response has been overwhelmingly favorable. The grass located in these parking lots now will be replaced with permeable paving to absorb the run off. The current grass located on the south side of the current sidewalk on Riverside will remain and Mill Race Park will not be disturbed for this project. When this project is let, we will also include the replacement of the parking lot behind 401 N. Main in this project. Councilmember Starr stated that we need to try to minimize the negative impact on those local businesses as much as we can during the construction of this project. Questions on making sure the contractors meet deadlines and/or possibly doing this in steps to help minimize down time. City engineer Fallis stated that if we put too many requirements in the bidding documents, the bids from contractors will more than likely be much higher than normal. Council asked that adequate signage be installed once the project is completed so people understand the flow of traffic.

Mayor Andrews left the meeting at 6:15 p.m. and mayor pro tem DeLaine Freeseaman took over chairing the meeting.

Staff would like to get this parking lot project out for bids as soon as possible since it is getting late in the bidding season. We would like to get this project done yet this construction season.

City clerk O'Donnell recently sent out requests for proposals for the city banking services and received four of them back. We do this every three years and have been with CUSB for a very long time. The highest interest rate was from First Security at 4.97% with CUSB second at 4.95%. There can be lots of issues when you switch banks, with ACH payments and having to order new checks, so staff is recommending that, for the negligible difference in interest, it would be best to stay with CUSB for the city banking services. This item will be on the next regular agenda for council consideration.

City engineer John Fallis reviewed the 2023 sanitary sewer lining project. It involves 3300 feet of lining for the base bid, 1600 feet for alternate bid one and 900 feet for alternate bid two. If the bids come back low enough, we may be able to do all three bids. The base bid involves Main Street from Riverside to North Grand. We have \$200,000 budgeted for this project and it would have a completion date of November 2023.

A possible vehicle stipend has been proposed by city administrator Diers in lieu of providing a city vehicle for him. The current vehicle, a 2010 Nissan Murano, is getting more and more issues needing fixing. Rather than provide a vehicle, Diers is proposing a vehicle stipend instead of \$500/month paid to him. This would cover any trips for city business up to 30 miles, anything over that would get mileage paid to him. Some discussion on selling the Murano or keeping it as a spare vehicle for other city employees to use. Questions also asked if city insurance would cover Diers while he was using his personal vehicle for city business and what other cities are paying for vehicle stipends. Diers will get this information gathered and send it out to the council.

As part of the water looping project, an easement is needed with MidAmerican to utilize their current easement area for a portion of the project. This would require an encroachment easement be executed with them. Once this is approved, we can then go out for bids on this project. Council member Starr asked if we had considered going with a larger diameter main in this area to try and be ready for possible future development here. City engineer Fallis will consult with SHE, who helped model our water system, to get their input on that.

Water superintendent Cory Spieker discussed needed repairs to well #5. The variable frequency drive needs to be replaced since the repair parts are no longer available. This part is roughly 20 years old. The total cost for the replacement is \$24,950.34, which includes installation. This will be on the next regular agenda for council consideration.

Spieker then discussed needed repairs to various sections of sewer mains. One of these sections needs to be cut out because it has asphalt blocking it and others have tree roots in them. Spieker will get some quotes and we will set a maximum total dollar amount of work to be done.

City administrator Diers reported that he has been made aware of some possible funding for broadband. It sounds like we probably wouldn't qualify for it but he will look into it anyway. He has talked to bond

counsel about a loan for removing ash trees and it is considered an essential corporate purpose. So we plan to borrow a total of \$500,000 with half coming out this current year and the rest coming out in FY24. We may look at hiring more than one contractor for this job to get it done faster.

Councilmember Freeseeman reported that the airport plans on doing a project this summer including repairs to the runway and also looking at closing the current grass runway. Will also be looking at more signage.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.

DeLaine Freeseeman, Mayor Pro Tem

Attest:

Trudy O'Donnell, City Clerk