

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING OF THE CITY
COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, ILLINOIS HELD TUESDAY,
MAY 28, 2013 IN THE COUNCIL ROOM OF CITY HALL**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ebersohl called the Committee of the Whole Meeting of the City Council of the City of Columbia, Illinois to order at 7:35 p.m.

Upon Roll Call, the following members were:

Present: Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Reis and Holtkamp.

Absent: Aldermen Huch and Mathews and Mayor Hutchinson.

Quorum Present.

Administrative Staff Present: City Administrator Al Hudzik, City Engineer Ron Williams, Chief of Police and EMS Director Joe Edwards, Interim EMS Chief Shannon Bound (left at 8:25 p.m.), Accounting Manager Linda Sharp (left at 8:25 p.m.) and Director of Community and Economic Development Paul Ellis (arrived at 8:15 p.m.).

Guests Present: Virgil Mueller (left at 8:05 p.m.), Maria Mueller (left at 8:15 p.m.) and EMS employees Darin Hartman, A.J. Nichols and Jenny Johnson (all arrived at 9:00 p.m. (after an ambulance call)).

Chairman Ebersohl stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss (1) EMS Department Operations; (2) parking at 1007 North Main St.; (3) organization membership dues; (4) the police dog issue; and (5) any other items to be considered.

II. EMS DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS DISCUSSION

Chairman Ebersohl opened the meeting and called upon Alderman Reis to address the Committee Members on this issue (note: this issue was moved from the Ambulance, Radio Communication and Dispatch Committee Meeting scheduled to be held at 7:00 p.m. since a quorum was not present for that meeting). Alderman Reis made opening comments and asked Interim EMS Chief Shannon Bound to update the Committee on the EMS Department Operations. Shannon informed the Committee Members that the EMS Department continues to struggle staffing a second ambulance due to a reduction of hours a paid volunteer may work (this is due to the Affordable Care Act and its requirement for employers to provide health insurance benefits to certain employees). She indicated that she was able to schedule a second ambulance for only ten (10) of June's sixty (60) shifts and that calls were being lost to other local EMS units (i.e., Monroe County and Dupo) due to the city not staffing a second ambulance – she also indicated she continues to receive requests from many groups for an EMS Department presence at community

events. She indicated that additional staff needed to be hired and/or the restriction on the number of hours a paid volunteer can work each week needed to be revised. A general discussion was then held in which all in attendance were given the opportunity to make comments, ask questions and express their opinions, including (i) how many additional part-time staff needed to be hired – Shannon suggested a minimum of ten (10) most of whom should be paramedics – she also indicated the city would have to advertise for applications since she doesn't currently have ten (10) applications in file; she also informed the Committee Members of the approximate costs involved to hire each additional employee (e.g., physical, drug test, clothing, training, etc.) as well as the time frame to train an EMS employee; (ii) that in addition to concerns about insurance costs due to the Affordable Care Act, initial collective bargaining negotiations will soon begin with American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Council 31 (representing the city's EMS employees) and the wages, benefits and working conditions resulting from the negotiations, along with their related costs, is unknown; (iii) meetings with Monroe County EMS personnel, as well as Dupo EMS personnel, should be held re: closer coordination of support/ambulance staging when the city only has one (1) ambulance in service – Alderman Reis indicated some of those discussions have occurred and future meetings will be scheduled; and (iv) police vehicles are equipped with oxygen tanks and AEDs to supplement EMS services – Police Chief Edwards indicated an officer is dispatched to all emergency EMS calls and is normally the first to arrive on scene – officers receive ongoing first aid, CPR and AED training. It was the consensus of the Committee Members that Interim EMS Chief Bound be authorized to hire ten (10) additional part-time EMS employees and that meetings be held with other local EMS Departments to discuss providing additional support to the Columbia EMS Department. Virgil Mueller then addressed the Committee Members and reviewed the call for assistance for Edith Dean – he indicated that since the lone city ambulance was on a call, Monroe County EMS was called and it took approximately twenty (20) minutes for them to arrive (Police Chief Edwards indicated a police officer was on scene within a matter of minutes); Virgil encouraged the council members to take the steps necessary to resolve the delayed service issue since the city's residents deserve the best ambulance service they can get. Additional discussion then occurred in which it was reiterated that Interim EMS Chief Bound could hire ten (10) additional part-time employees and that additional EMS support meetings should be held as soon as possible.

III. POLICE DOG DISCUSSION

Chairman Ebersohl called upon Police Chief Joe Edwards to address the Committee Members on this issue. Joe reminded the Committee Members of the recent passing of police dog Officer Cezar approximately one (1) week ago due to kidney failure (Cezar faithfully served the Columbia Police Department and the City of Columbia for approximately eight (8) years). He informed them that Cezar was Columbia's first (and only) police dog and funds were raised by Columbia schools, civic organizations and private donations (approximately \$16,000) to purchase, equip and train Cezar and his handler (Sgt. Josh Bayer). Joe indicated that Cezar was an invaluable part of the police department and was instrumental in many arrests – he also played an integral part in public relations on behalf of the city. It was Joe's recommendation that the city immediately begin the process of obtaining another police dog (he estimated the cost to

be \$15,000 to \$17,000) and request community donations to reimburse the city for any costs incurred. Joe indicated that he had already received pledges/funds from local businessmen Craig Inman (in the amount of \$1,000) and Chris Kalbfleisch (in the amount of \$1,000); local businessman Joe Koppies was in attendance at the meeting and made a pledge of \$5,000. All Committee Members felt that another police dog should be obtained as soon as possible.

MOTION:

It was moved by Alderman Roessler and seconded by Alderman Holtkamp to recommend to the City Council that Police Chief Edwards start the process of obtaining another police dog for the city. Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Reis and Holtkamp voted yea. **MOTION CARRIED**

IV. 1007 NORTH MAIN PARKING DISCUSSION

Community and Economic Development Director Paul Ellis reviewed a letter (which had previously been distributed to the Committee Members) from Joe Hardin, Broker Associate of the Barber Murphy Group, indicating that Continental Grain and Barge Company (the “Company”) was considering opening a grain brokerage office at 1007 N. Main St., and wanted to know if the city would consider providing parking space at the Police Complex, since the Company didn’t feel adequate parking spaces were available for its employees and visitors. Paul indicated that Police Chief Edwards, City Engineer Williams and he had recently met with representatives of the Company (including Mr. Hardin) and it was their opinion that sufficient space would be available at the Police Complex to meet the Company’s parking needs. Both Police Chief Edwards and City Engineer Williams concurred with the comments made by Ellis – Williams also indicated that a formal lease agreement would be needed if the Company used city property for their parking. A brief discussion was then held and it was the consensus of the Committee Members that city staff (i) notify representatives of the Company of the city’s willingness to allow the Company to use city property for parking purposes provided an acceptable lease can be negotiated; and (ii) be authorized to begin lease negotiations for presentation to the council members in the future.

V. ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP DUES DISCUSSION

City Administrator Hudzik then reviewed his Memo of May 23rd (previously distributed to the Committee Members) and summarized the actions taken by the council four (4) years ago pertaining to city paid memberships in the Chamber of Commerce and civic organizations (i.e., the city would only pay for two (2) memberships to the Chamber of Commerce (one for the Community and Economic Development Director and one for the Event Coordinator)) – he indicated the council would have to take additional action(s) to allow more city paid memberships for the Chamber and to expand the paid memberships to civic organizations. Hudzik recommended that the Committee give consideration to (i) increasing the number of city paid Chamber memberships (he recommended five (5) to include meals only for the Community and Economic Development Director and the Event Coordinator); and (ii) allow for the payment of civic organization membership dues – he stated he felt the benefits received by the city due to city participation in the various organizations would outweigh the costs to the city – participation also serves as

community outreach to the various groups involved – Police Chief Edwards and Community and Economic Development Director Ellis made concurring comments. A general discussion was then held and all in attendance were given the opportunity to make comments, ask questions and express their opinions on this topic including (a) city representatives can attend civic organization meetings when a presentation is requested; (b) benefits are derived from membership participation, active involvement in fundraising activities and city representation in various groups – it helps with the city’s outreach efforts and has resulted in donations of labor, equipment and funds to the city from civic organizations; (c) if memberships are provided, the city representatives are expected to be active in the organizations; and (d) it should be up to the Department Heads to determine memberships and budget accordingly.

MOTION:

It was moved by Alderman Reis and seconded by Alderman Niemietz to recommend to the City Council that the city provide (i.e., pay for) up to five (5) Chamber of Commerce Memberships for the city’s elected officials, Department Heads (or their designee) and Event Coordinator, with lunch being provided for the Community & Economic Development Director and the Event Coordinator only. Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Niemietz, Roessler, Reis and Holtkamp voted yea; Alderman Agne voted nay.

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION:

It was moved by Alderman Niemietz and seconded by Alderman Holtkamp to recommend to the City Council that the city provide (i.e., pay for) civic organization memberships (meals not included) for the city’s Department Heads (or their designee) as determined by the Department Heads and contained in their budgets. Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Reis and Holtkamp voted yea. **MOTION**

CARRIED

VI. OTHER ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED OR DISCUSSED

Alderman Reis summarized the discussions occurring in the EMS Department Operations Discussion portion of this meeting to the EMS employees arriving after a call at 9:00 p.m. (see “Guests Present” on P. 1 hereof).

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

It was moved by Alderman Roessler and seconded by Alderman Reis to adjourn the Committee of the Whole Meeting of the City Council of the City of Columbia, Illinois held Tuesday, May 28, 2013 at 9:20 p.m. Upon Roll Call vote, Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Reis and Holtkamp voted yea. **MOTION**

CARRIED.



GENE EBERSOHL, Chairman
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Minutes taken by:

Albert G. Hudzik
ALBERT G. HUDZIK, City Administrator

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINANCE, PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE
MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, ILLINOIS
HELD TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2013 IN THE COUNCIL ROOM OF CITY HALL**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jim Agne called the Ordinance, Planning and Zoning Committee Meeting of the City Council of the City of Columbia, Illinois to order at 7:10 p.m.

Upon Roll Call, the following members were:

Present: Chairman Agne and Aldermen Ebersohl, Niemietz and Reis.

Absent: None.

Quorum Present.

Others Present: Aldermen Roessler and Holtkamp.

Administrative Staff Present: City Administrator Al Hudzik, City Engineer Ron Williams, Chief of Police and EMS Director Joe Edwards, Interim EMS Chief Shannon Bound, Director of Community and Economic Development Paul Ellis (arrived at 7:15 p.m.) and Accounting Manager Linda Sharp (arrived at 7:25 p.m.).

Guests Present: None.

Chairman Agne stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss (1) vehicle parking on unpaved surfaces on private property; and (2) any other items to be considered.

**II. VEHICLE PARKING ON UNPAVED SURFACES ON PRIVATE PROPERTY
DISCUSSION**

Chairman Agne opened the meeting and indicated the challenge before the committee was to balance complaints about RVs and recreational trailers kept in residential areas vs. allowing RVs and recreational trailers to be located in those neighborhoods. He then (1) gave an example of a resident making property improvements (i.e., driveway extension) to allow for the parking of his recreational vehicle, and even though the improvements met the requirements of the city's Municipal Code, a neighbor criticized the city for allowing the parking of the vehicle on the improvements; and (2) summarized the comments made by Ray Fischer at the May 6, 2013 city council meeting concerning this subject. A general discussion was then held in which all in attendance were given the opportunity to make comments, ask questions and express their opinions, including (i) subdivisions can adopt their own covenants pertaining to RV/recreational trailer parking, which can be stricter than the city's regulations; (ii) consideration could be given to allow parking on unpaved areas if the vehicle is located at least ten (10) feet back from the face of the front of the house; (iii) several residents have indicated they prefer the status quo rather than changing the regulations – they felt many residents would be punished to alleviate a problem caused by a few offenders – many also felt the city

should be able to utilize the provisions of its current nuisance ordinance(s) to address the offenders; (iv) many of the problems exist in older neighborhoods that have small lots and don't have subdivision covenants; (v) recreational vehicle parking (as currently allowed) can detrimentally affect property values and neighborhood aesthetics; (vi) examples of various perceived problems should be documented and sent to city staff to see if they violate current regulations and can be addressed, or if additional regulations may be required; (vii) perceived problems vary from person to person – several people can view the same situation and have differing opinions as to whether it is a violation of city regulations; (viii) commercial vehicle parking is regulated in residential areas. It was the consensus of the Committee/Council members that further research needs to be done on this issue and it should again be addressed in the future – in the meantime, examples of perceived problems can be sent to city staff for their review/action.

III. OTHER ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED OR DISCUSSED

None

IV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

It was moved by Alderman Niemietz and seconded by Alderman Ebersohl to adjourn the Ordinance, Planning and Zoning Committee Meeting of the City Council of the City of Columbia, Illinois held Tuesday, May 28, 2013, at 7:35 p.m. Upon Roll Call vote, Chairman Agne and Aldermen Ebersohl, Niemietz and Reis voted yea. **MOTION**


CARRIED.



JIM AGNE, Chairman

ORDINANCE, PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE

Minutes taken by:



ALBERT G. HUDZIK, City Administrator