

City of Watseka
Special Called Meeting
Watsoka City Council

August 2, 2022

The Special Called Meeting was called to order at 7pm by Alderman Barragree. Present were Aldermen Cahoe, Marcier, Miller, Garfield, Barragree, and Alderwoman Musk. Absent was Mayor Allhands, Alderman Rushbrook and Alderwoman Ulfers.

Alderman Barragree shared before the meeting gets started officer Stanley had something to share with the council. Officer Stanley was in attendance for a straw pull for a new hire of a new officer from Hoopeston, Officer Stanley reported that they have been working a lot of over time since they had an officer retire and one quit, they need another officer, they have an officer from Hoopeston willing to come to Watseka this officer resides in Watseka on Elm Street, but he needs to keep his pay rate per hour the same. Officer Stanley reported a new officer hire is usually \$21.78 this officer makes \$24.61 per hour in Hoopeston currently if the council is in favor of this new hire at the pay rate of \$24.61, he will give his two weeks' notice to Hoopeston and then he can start. All the council was in favor of the new officer hire and pay rate.

Discussion of and Possible Approval of: Labors Local 751 and Operators Union #399 Contract.

Loren Grosvenor the new Public Works Director was in attendance. Loren reported he has had a loss of employees, 1 terminated and he is about to lose one due to wages. Loren shared that a higher pay scale and better starting pay is needed along with skills, licenses, and certifications. He would like to see Stipends this will encourage employees to get licenses or certifications this would be good also for new talent and this would help with retaining employees and help improve moral. Lots of discussion was had on stipends most of the council are not in favor of this.

Alderwoman Musk shared she feels stipends are very expensive she feels the employees already have a good benefit package with sick time, vacation time, insurance, etc. she said we are a town of 5000 people, our citizens are already being taxed to death we are killing our community with these types of things we are a smaller community. She also feels that there should be a limit that not every employee should be able to do this.

Loren shared that the guys do a magnitude of jobs not just one job, a lot is asked of them many jobs and things happen very quickly. Loren was asked how many of the employees have their CDL he shared 4 do and 2 from the water dept. do he would like it if every employee had a CDL so they weren't limited on the jobs they can do or plowing. Loren shared his department has big demands from everyone, high expectations and yes, the employees need to be held accountable. Most of the council was in favor of helping obtain a CDL but no specific guidelines have been determined.

Alderman Barragree shared 11 employees 7 public works and 4 water they were given high end raises he shared that the budget has come in below \$46,000 since they lost 2 high paid employees new hires starting at \$22 is doable with the budget without stipends. He is ok with the incentive as it is getting harder and harder to find people to work there are places here in town that pay better wages.

Alderman Garfield is open to a one-time amount to help obtain licenses/certifications but not a stipend. Cost are going up everywhere we as the city have to provide a service to the citizens of Watseka.

Alderman Cahoe shared most of these employees got nice raises not to long ago, they get \$800 towards clothing, he is not in favor of the stipend either he feels the guys need to actually work 5 days a week not when they want they need to show that they care have pride in what they do, the mowing they do looks like crap, he is open to helping with the CDL as we help pay for police/fire training and he is against the \$1.25 Foreman pay as this will open the door for others to want the same thing.

Loren shared he understand what the council is saying he is starting fresh this is for future employees not the past he wants to go forward.

Alderman Miller asked about Karen at the pool she just recently asked for more money could she be trained or take the class to check the water at the pool to take some off of the PW Dept. By doing this she could do the testing and make more money.

Alderman Marcier is open to helping with the CDL, Foreman wage no, he is good with the proposed rates if Loren is ok with them he feels it should be up to Loren to decide the wages.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN DISCUSSION ONLY

Alderman Cahoe handed out handouts from the Mayor they are looking to do a couple things downtown such as black rod iron furniture he asked that everyone look things over they would like to purchase these items soon the money is in the budget for this everyone was in favor of this tonight.

A Motion was made by Barragree, seconded by Garfield to Adjourn at 8:48pm. Motion passed 6-0.

Amanda Hibbs

City Clerk