

City of Watseka
Special Called Meeting
Witseka City Council
August 17, 2022

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

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

Loren Grosvenor Public Works Director and Attorney Mike Cainkar were also present.

Mr. Cainkar shared that everyone agreed upon the basics with the contract with Public Works and Water/Sewer, the left column was also agreed upon too to recruit and retain better quality employees by bumping up the wages and adding some specialty items, he reported he spoke to both Unions on the delay. Mr. Cainkar stated to be clear prior to this PW Director there was no requirement to obtain or maintain a CDL this was never in the CBA, in the job description yes, it is hard to terminate employment with things not being with the CBA they have agreed to add this. Mr. Cainkar did not feel having a CDL would affect water/sewer it is more of a requirement for Public Works not so much water/sewer. Public works Umbrella Streets/Alleys Sewer/Water more cross training and more money if required to have certain certifications. Mr. Cainkar came to the meeting tonight to get a consensus so he can prepare the agreement.

Alderwoman Musk shared that a majority of the council were not in favor of the stipends, that obtaining a CDL was intensive more money for the city to assist with, she wanted to know if an agreement could be signed with the employee that if they do offer the stipends can they be required to work for the city for a set amount of time so that the city can recoup from the cost. She shared that these employees who hold these roles already get overtime, whomever has to check the pool checks it two times a day for 20 minutes a day and they are paid for 3 hours of labor, those receiving holiday pay to do this are getting the advantage they should not get both pay advantage and stipends.

Loren Public Works Director shared there was mismanagement prior to him he is trying to manage this he is coming up with ways to utilize those employees by combining them with other tasks.

Mayor Allhands said by doing the stipends it would be some sort of advance for the employees we are not in the same market we were as of 3 years ago and since COVID hit.

Alderwoman Ulfers asked Loren what was the starting wage at other places you have worked within the last 2 years? Loren shared \$20 start out was a Field Tech one with no experience, each title had a different pay rate based on experience. Loren shared with the constant turn over in employees this is only hurting the citizens of Watseka, it cost the city more money and could put the Director's licenses at

risk. Doing the stipends would give the citizens better quality work and better-quality employees. Mr. Cainkr asked about creating a HEO (Heavy Equipment Operator) but hard to do right now with few employees.

Alderwoman Ulfers asked Loren about the cost of getting a CDL, Loren said DACC called him back Class B about \$800, permit, \$50 roughly a \$1000.00 with a 12-hour online course, 2 days of driving 4 hours and the instructor takes you to the DMV but the employee would also be paid he wages while doing this class.

Mayor Allhands then asked Mr. Cainkar can vacation time be mandated or regulated, Mr. Cainkar said yes you can its in the collective bargaining agreement.

Discussion was then had about having this process auditing, are the license good, up to date, etc, Loren would have to monitor this going forward if the stipends were to happen. Alderwoman Musk feels that these positions should be limited that not every employee should get to do this 1 or 2 in each classification.

Alderman Cahoe asked Mr. Cainkar do we need both Unions? Public Works need to be under one umbrella, we need to pay the best we can, get rid of the Operators' Union. He feels all the employees need to be treated equal, vacation time, uniforms, paid holidays the issue is pay we need to establish a starting point, so employees stay, help with the CDL give them .25 cents on their check, weed sprayer give them .25 cents on their check, they need a fair salary and respect.

Mr. Cainkar if a CDL is expected you have more worth in general labor.

Alderman Marcier made the proposal to accept the Right side of the proposal stipends for both departments allowing Loren to have the option for the starting wage from \$17-\$22 an hour based on experience keeping the CDL Stipend, keeping the Commercial Public Applicator Stipend, Keeping the Certified Pool Operator Stipend removing the Arborist. More discussion was had on creating different classifications and having an agreement that if the city helps with those licenses the employee must work for the city for 18 months or they must pay it back. Discussion was also had on adding that the employee must obtain a CDL by a certain date by their probationary period.

Mr. Cainkar will draw up a new proposal and sent it to the council members for approval.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN DISCUSSION ONLY.

A Motion was made by Barragree, seconded by Ulfers to Adjourn at 8:29pm. Motion passed 7-0.

Amanda Hibbs

City Clerk