

City of Watseka
201 Brianna Dr
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FINANCE, LEGAL & AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING
JULY 18, 2023
6:30 PM

PRESENT: Aldermen Marcier, Cahoe, Barragree, Miller, Anderson, Alderwomen Rohlfs and DeLahr and Mayor Allhands

ABSENT: Alderman Muench

GUESTS: Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Amanda Hibbs, Scott Allen with Woody Williams Foundation, Mike Lynch with MSL Benefits, and John Zumwalt and John Shure with the Iroquois County Board

Alderman Marcier opened the meeting at 6:30 pm. There was no public comment. Amanda Hibbs spoke first about military banners that the chamber would like to put in the downtown area. These hometown hero banners are for local residents that are active or past members of the military. The banners are good for 3 years and there will be an application for the family members to fill out to purchase the banner. Amanda is asking the city to purchase the double brackets that will be needed to hang both banners for all 38 poles for a cost of \$6500.00.

Alderman Cahoe makes a motion to recommend to the Council to purchase the brackets for a cost of \$6500.00 and Alderman Anderson seconded. Roll call carried 8-0. This will be paid for from the Promotion line item.

Scott Allen with Woody Williams Foundation/Gold Star spoke next. They are wanting to put up a granite memorial at the entrance of Legion Park. He stated there are 122 monuments in place already and another 67 in progress. They will need \$100,000.00 to install this memorial. The granite alone is \$57,000.00 and they will need half before they can order. They are hosting several fund raisers and so far, have raised \$3300.00. **Alderman Marcier makes a motion to recommend to the Council to donate \$10,000.00 from the promotion line item and Alderman Cahoe seconded. Roll call carried 8-0.**

Mike Lynch with MSL Benefits spoke next about employee health insurance. The current policy with Blue Cross Blue Shield came back with a 14.2% increase. Mr. Lynch has checked with 6 other carriers. He did get Blue Cross to come down to 7.6% increase and if the city would add a dental plan it would drop to 5.8% increase. A discussion was held about United Health Care plans and whether they have a dental option. After more discussion the committee asked Mr. Lynch to look into United Health Care's dental option and have the information for full council next week.

John Zumwalt and John Shure with the Iroquois County board spoke next regarding the Iroquois County Storm Sewer Drainage project. Mr. Zumwalt is on the management committee with the county, and they are interested in doing a storm sewer project along Loveridge Lane to Grant St to the Court House and the maintenance shed. Mr. Zumwalt stated this is a shared problem as water sets after a rain event. They would like to put in a 12-inch field tile. This

would start on the northeast corner of Loveridge Lane and is about 1600 feet of pipe with a cost of around \$230,000.00 and they are asking for the city to pay for half. It was stated when the Loveridge Lane subdivision was built there should have been a swale put in and the current piping is undersized for today's codes. If a swale were put in now, it would be more costly, and the railroad would have to be involved. Alderwoman DeLahr was against this project completely because she believes it's not a city issue it's a county issue and she doesn't believe in spending taxpayers' dollars to help out the few residents that have standing water in their yards when there are water issues all over the city. Alderman Anderson asked if public works could do any of the work to save on costs. Public Works Director Loren Grosvenor said they could probably do some of it but not all of it. After a lengthy discussion it was agreed to put the project out for bids.

Alderman Marcier stated the city currently has Homefield Energy for an energy supplier and has had for many years. The new rates will be in effect in August 2023. **Alderman Anderson makes a motion to recommend to the Council to continue with Homefield Energy for the supplier and Alderman Marcier seconded. Roll call carried 8-0.**

Middleport Township Annexation into the County from the city was discussed next. Mayor Allhands stated the only reason he has been given was because of the city's burning ordinance. After a short discussion **Alderman Cahoe makes a motion to recommend to the Council to deny the annexation into the county and Alderman Barragree seconded. Roll call carried 8-0.**

Mayor Allhands stated Watseka Ford is requesting for the city to redo the current sales tax agreement by starting all over and they are requesting the maximum amount from the revolving loan. Mayor Allhands stated the believes that is \$250,000. He also stated the current sales tax agreement is for 15 years and they are just starting year 5. The committee is ok with a revolving loan for Watseka Ford but wants to continue the current sales tax agreement.

Mayor Allhands read a short report from Nextsite regarding getting new businesses in the city.

Alderman Marcier makes a motion to adjourn at 7:46 pm and Alderman Barragree seconded. Motion carried 8-0.

Benny Marcier, Chairman