

Watseka City Council Meeting

Tuesday, April 23rd, 2024

The City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Allhands at 6:30pm. Present were Aldermen Barragree, Marcier, Cahoe, Miller, Anderson, Muench, & Alderwoman Rohlf and DeLahr.

A Motion was made by Marcier, seconded by Miller to Approve the City Council Regular Meeting Minutes of March 26th, 2024. Motion passed 8-0.

Berkot's Representative Luke Kotara & Joel Riggs AWG Representative to discuss and take possible action in retention of Berkot's. Luke Kotara is the president of Berkot's and Joel Riggs is the AWG Representative they came to discuss the economic challenges they are facing. AWG is a grocery wholesaler. They help independently owned stores and mom and pop stores. They have 35 locations across the US. They are trying to help the store survive, Berkot's is losing money monthly, they are trying to investigate how they can solidify the longevity of the store. Joel is working on ways to save money. They are working on lease issues so that maybe the rent can be lowered, mayor also shared to ask if the building is for sale. Both are in attendance tonight to ask about a possible tax abatement, would the council consider this, all Berkot's options are on table. Joel and Luke would like to come up with a proposal for the city they will work on this asap they will work with the city's fiancé manager and the mayor will get the info from the Teska study.

Public Comment- Roger Bard was in attendance, he saw on the agenda for tonight was the approval of \$16,500 for a Loveridge Lane ditch digging project using city funds and city workers for a project in the mayor's backyard. Roger shared his thoughts on this project, he stated he knows how the voting will go and he is against this project. Doug Geiger then shared that this project is going to benefit more than the mayor's backyard. The mayor then showed a presentation on the screen in the chambers and more discussion was had.

Ordinances, Resolutions, Agreements & Proclamations

- Ordinance #2709- Authorizing a Loan Agreement with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Under the Wate Pollution Control Loan Program
- Pay Rates Effective 5-1-2024: Building Inspector \$29.19, Code Enforcement \$25.20, Administrative Assistant \$31.39, Police Secretary \$22.05, Deputy Chief \$47.90, Police Chief \$62.04, Public Works Director-Wastewater Management \$68.75
- Loveridge Lane Project: \$16,500 with Public Works doing the project
- Fox Group Engagement Letter- \$51,000 for fiscal year 2024-2025

Consent Agenda

- Ordinance #2709- Authorizing a Loan Agreement with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Under the Wate Pollution Control Loan Program
- Pay Rates Effective 5-1-2024: Building Inspector \$29.19, Code Enforcement \$25.20, Administrative Assistant \$31.39, Police Secretary \$22.05, Deputy Chief \$47.90, Police Chief \$62.04, Public Works Director-Wastewater Management \$68.75

- Loveridge Lane Project: \$16,500 with Public Works doing the project
- Fox Group Engagement Letter- \$51,000 for fiscal year 2024-2025

A Motion was made by Marcier, seconded by Barragree Ordinance #2709- Authorizing a Loan Agreement with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Under the Wate Pollution Control Loan Program. Motion passed 8-0.

A Motion was made by Marcier, seconded by Barragree Discussion was had Alderwoman DeLahr is not in favor of all these pay increases she gave some wages from other towns like Watseka she feels with the current benefits that are also added to their salary. Alderwoman DeLahr feels that the city should be run like a business since they are the Business of the Month from the Chamber, she feels we just keep taxing our residents with this tax, that tax, etc. she feels we need to look out for the constituents. Alderman Anderson shared that he is not opposed to providing pay raises. He would like to see employee annual reviews before the city just pays out. Pay Rates Effective 5-1-2024: Building Inspector \$29.19, Code Enforcement \$25.20, Administrative Assistant \$31.39, Police Secretary \$22.05, Deputy Chief \$47.90, Police Chief \$62.04, Public Works Director-Wastewater Management \$68.75. Motion passed 6-1 and 1 abstain. Alderwoman DeLahr voting No and Alderman Anderson abstained.

A Motion was made by Barragree, seconded by Rohlfs Loveridge Lane Project: \$16,500 with Public Works doing the project. Motion passed 6-1 and 1 abstain. Alderwoman DeLahr voting No and Alderman Anderson abstained.

A Motion was made by Marcier, seconded by Rohlfs Fox Group Engagement Letter- \$51,000 for fiscal year 2024-2025. Motion passed 8-0.

Standing Committee Reports

- **Finance, Legal and Audit**

A Motion was made by Marcier, seconded by Muench Claims in the amount of \$1,874,608.06. Motion passed 8-0.

A Motion was made by Marcier, seconded by Barragree Accept and place on the file the March Treasurers report. Motion passed 8-0.

A Motion was made by Marcier, seconded by Cahoe approve the balanced Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Motion passed 8-0.

A Motion was made by Barragree, Seconded by Muench Knights of Columbus donation of \$7500 for fireworks. Motion passed 8-0.

A Motion was made by Marcier, seconded by Cahoe Transfer \$200,000 from general Fund 1-10-1000 into Capital Equipment 1-10-1045. Motion passed 8-0.

Public Works/Water Wastewater

IPC \$2,738,901.81 for Kay Street & Sanitary Separation Project. Keith provided an update; no action was taken.

A Motion was made by Cahoe, seconded by Barragree A Plus Home Improvement \$7275 for fencing at 128 W Walnut. Motion passed 8-0.

Public Safety

None

Code Enforcement

A Motion was made by Cahoe, seconded by Anderson 520 N 2nd Demolition- KB&E \$16,200. Motion passed 8-0.

A Motion was made by Cahoe, seconded by Anderson Adopt a lot: 428 E Elm to Joshua Douglas. Motion passed 8-0.

A Motion was made by Miller, seconded by Cahoe Façade Grant: Massey Design \$3800. Motion passed 8-0.

Miscellaneous Business

Alderman Anderson brought up the water main break that happened he saw it on Facebook no press release was issued, he stated that needs to be done, he also shared that he works at the health department and they were not notified. Loren Public Works Director said he tried he had an issue with the contact person, the person he had is no longer there he now has updated contact info. Alderman Anderson stated a press release should have been done and all the council should have been emailed to be aware of the situation. Loren shared that when the water main break happened, they had to isolate a section, they had to remove some trees. 1 valve they had hand dig to get to it and it was in the off position, this showed lack of maintenance on the water system, out of 6 valves 4 were shut off several workers worked to find this issue as to why we lost water, an 8 inch loop that was put in was never in service this caused discolored water, low pressure to the hospital and nursing home. Having quality workers helped in this situation. Alderman Miller shared regarding pay raises that someone flipping burger at McDonalds making \$13-\$14 think about the pay incentive for them.

A Motion was made by Rohlfs, seconded by Marcier to adjourn at 7:44pm. Motion passed 8-0.

Amanda Hibbs, City Clerk