

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Iola was held on February 10, 2020, at 6:00 p.m., at the Park Community Building, 510 Park Avenue, Iola, Kansas.

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Mayor Wells called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Wells and Council Members, Peters, Ballard, Kinder, Peterson, Myrick, Slaugh, and French were present. Also present were Administrator Fleming, Assistant Administrator Schinstock, and City Clerk Hutton. Absent was Council Member Ford.

**REVIEW & APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion made by Council Member Myrick and seconded by Council Member Ballard to approve the agenda as presented. All in favor. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mayor Wells read the following statement:

*Persons who wish to address the City Council regarding items on the agenda may do so as that agenda item is called. Persons who wish to address the City Council regarding items not on the agenda and that are under the jurisdiction of the City Council may do so at this time when called upon by the Mayor. Comments on personnel matters and matters pending in court or with other outside tribunals are not permitted. Speakers are limited to three minutes. Any presentation is for information purposes only. No action will be taken.*

Following Mayor Wells reading of the aforementioned statement, he asked members of the audience if they wished to address the Council.

No one from the audience had any public comments at this time.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Minutes Approval**

- **January 27, 2020**

**B. Appropriations Approval**

Motion made by Council Member Ballard to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Council Member Myrick. All in favor. Motion carried.

## ROUNDTABLE

**A. Utility Policies - Discussion** Administrator Fleming noted that Representatives from Humanity House have approached City officials to engage in a conversation about the City of Iola's utility policies. The conversation has focused on the Electric Utility and the City's Billing and Collection Practices. He noted that this item is for discussion only and no action will be taken.

Tracy Keagle and Georgia Masterson, of Humanity House addressed the Council. Ms. Keagle noted that when Georgia Master and herself were part of the Connectors Program they were focusing on connecting individuals in need of resources. She stated that the three things that were the most concerning for individuals were utilities, rent, and food and how they were going to pay for these things.

Ms. Keagle noted that in the Iola area there are several individuals at or near the poverty level noting that in addition to these individuals there are some individuals that are one tragedy away from poverty. She noted that individuals in need of assistance include those struggling with drug addiction, children, and those that just live paycheck to paycheck.

Ms. Keagle stated that the current Utility Policy of the City of Iola is punitive and not helpful to the city and detrimental to businesses. Individuals that struggle to pay their bills shop locally. They are putting less into the community by having to pay for utility fees.

Ms. Keagle relayed a story from an individual. The individual had to stay at home to care for his ill spouse. He gave the Landlord his check for utilities. The Landlord forgot to take it to the City and the Utilities were disconnected for non-payment.

The Humanity House proposal would allow individuals to change their due date, this would assist the customer to pay their bill on time and be eligible for level pay. Allow individuals to have 3, 6, or 12 months to pay on a bill when they have an emergency come up making it a hardship to pay that bill. Change the current 5% late fee to 2%. Don't charge the \$25.00 fee if the utilities are not disconnected. The customer has enough incentive to pay their bill having their electric utility disconnected.

Ms. Keagle noted that human life is worth more than a few dollars in the city coffers.

Mayor Wells asked the Council Members what their feeling is on changing due dates if requested.

Council Member Ballard stated he would like to hear from staff regarding the issue.

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City Clerk Hutton noted that individuals are given a minimum 28 days prior to the due date and an additional 12 days to pay prior to disconnection. This allows everyone to pay their bill on their payday. Changing individual due dates would cause some problems for the billing cycle. She wasn't sure if it even is possible with the software program the City uses.

Council Member Ballard stated that he doesn't think that this is a road the City should go.

Council Member Slaugh stated that in his opinion the City allows too much time to pay their bill. Decreasing this time will prevent the customer from owing almost three full bills before they reach disconnection.

Council Member Myrick stated that he would like some more information about the ability to change the dates.

Council Member Kinder stated he thought allowing the elderly or disabled individuals to choose a different due date would be fine if it would not create extra work for the staff.

Council Member Peters stated that he thought it should be left as it is.

Council Member French stated that it would be helpful if the Council could look at some form of Humanitarian effort. Possibly reducing the delinquency fee based upon the individual's income. He reminded everyone that the Council just approved charging the customer the 3% credit card service charge.

Council Member Peterson stated after staff did some investigation of the software's ability to change due dates. If this is a possibility she would be in favor of changing the due dates.

Mayor Wells asked the Council's thoughts on the 3-6-12 month payment plan.

Council Member Kinder stated that staff had mentioned if the customer comes to the City Clerk due to a high bill due to a leak etc. He thought that the staff's judgment was the best way to handle this.

Council Member Peters stated that he had no interest in allowing payment plans.

Council Member Myrick stated that he wasn't interested in allowing payment plans.

Council Member Slaugh stated that individuals have resources available to assist with a bill. Staff gives a list of those resources to customers that request it. He thinks our current policy should stay as it is.

Council Member Ballard stated that when he started his business he allowed individuals to pay on whatever day they wanted. Several accounts were being paid later, creating a larger balance for the customer.

Mayor Wells asked for the Council Members' thoughts on a 2% versus a 5% late fee. He asked the staff about the fee for Lawrence. They stated that Lawrence has a \$40.00 reconnect fee along with a deposit equal to an average of the individual's utility bill.

Council Members stated that they wanted assurance that the fee covers staff's time to process disconnects.

Administrator Fleming stated that the cost of each disconnect costs approximately \$30-\$48 fees.

Council Member Peterson asked why an after-hours turn-on would be allowed.

Administrator Fleming stated that a customer wants their power turned on after 4:00 p.m. Staff have to call out the on-call employee to turn it on. The customer is charged an extra \$75.00 for this after-hours service.

Staff will look into the ability to change due dates with the current software as well as if the late and disconnection fees cover these expenses.

**B. Water Rate-Discussion** - Administrator Fleming noted that staff needs some direction from the Council. What do they want to just cover the water department expenses, build up and maintain an adequate reserve fund, and/or fund the CIP Fund to make necessary infrastructure improvements?

Mayor Wells stated that the CIP Needs to be funded to make the necessary improvements.

Council Member Slaugh stated that the fund should have a reserve of 90 days of expenses in addition to a \$250,000 emergency reserve along with a transfer of \$100,000 to the CIP Fund.

Council Member Ballard noted that he would like to see a 90-day cash reserve. We need to be realistic about what we can do as far as the CIP funding.

Mayor Wells noted that having Scott Shreve as our energy consultant could help us with a rate analysis.

Council Member Myrick noted that he had spoken to residents and they would accept the increase better if it was spread out over months and not at all at once.

Council Member Kinder agreed with Council Member Slaugh. It needs to be done in order to accommodate the CIP transfers.

Council Member Peters wanted to assure that rates for both residential and commercial customers are increased.

Administrator Fleming stated that the meter charge would be increased as well as the per-unit charge in order to affect all of the customers. He noted that the Council will need to make plans on what they will do with the amount of money that is used to pay for the water plant in 2026 when the bond is paid off. Noting that the Water Plant will be 20 years old at that time and the Water Master Plan recommended a number of line improvements

Administrator Fleming noted that in his professional opinion the business side of the water fund. It has to be an increase that is fair to all customers. The CIP Fund has to be realistic goals with the most important being a higher priority. It will take baby steps to grow the CIP funding where it needs to be but the City needs to get there.

Council Member Peterson stated the rates have to be adjusted and add a \$50,000 transfer to the General Fund.

Council Member Slaugh stated that 10%, 10%, and 5% increase over the next three years would be a good approach. Making the increases effective May 1st of each year. He suggested staff bring back an ordinance to the next meeting showing these increases for meter charge and the per-unit charge.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. Cereal Malt Beverage License Renewal** - City Clerk Hutton informed the Council that Coronado's turned in their application to serve CMB on-premise. Motion made by Council Member Ballard and seconded by Council Member Peterson to approve a CMB permit for Consumption on Premises for Coronado's Restaurant at 1401 East Street effective February 11th through December 31, 2020 pending a final inspection by the Iola Fire Department. Voting in favor of the motion was Council Members Ballard, Peterson, Peters, Kinder, French and Slaugh. Voting against the motion was Council Member Myrick. Motion passed by majority vote.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Street Sweeper Equipment Purchase** - Administrator Fleming noted that for the 2020 Budget, Street & Alley staff evaluated its fleet in the spring of 2019. At that time, it was determined that Unit #30, a dump truck and salt spreader, and Unit #24, a ¾ ton pickup, should be scheduled for replacement in 2020 and the street sweeper had an anticipated replacement date of 2021. Since that time the street sweeper has encountered numerous maintenance problems, and staff now recommends adjusting the replacement schedule.

Dan Leslie, Street & Alley Superintendent, informed the Council that earlier in the year, staff demoed a RAVO 5-I Series Compact Sweeper. The vendor that was presenting the demo stated that a 2018 model was available. RAVO had overbuilt this model and sent the extra units to dealers to sell as brand new and including all warranties.

Sourcewell is a nationwide joint purchasing governmental cooperative. They have bid for the street sweeper and Atlantic Machinery, Inc., a dealer for RAVO was the winning bidder.

Mayor Wells stated that he has heard from residents when the street sweeper is not working it causes a lot of problems.

Council Member Myrick asked Mr. Leslie if the staff would need to be trained on this new machine.

Mr. Leslie stated that the salesperson will review the operation of the unit as well as videos are available to screen.

Council Member Peterson asked where the money was coming from?

Administrator Fleming noted that the money had accumulated over time with transfers to the Equipment Reserve Fund.

Mr. Leslie stated that the old unit will be placed on the Gavel Roads Auction Site. RAVO will not take a trade-in for the old unit.

Council Member Ballard asked about the cost of the maintenance on the current unit.

Mr. Leslie stated he had purchased ongoing parts for the unit Including but not limited to bearings, and chains.

Administrator Fleming noted that having to repair the unit over and over created downtime for the employees.

Council Member Kinder asked about the two-year warranty. Mr. Leslie stated that is normal for this type of equipment.

Council Member Peters asked if the new unit would cover more territory versus the older unit.

Mr. Leslie noted that it packs the debris tighter and will hold more which will prevent the dump truck from having to gather the debris and dispose of it as often.

Motion made by Council Member Peters and seconded by Council Member Kinder to approve the purchase of a 2018RAVO 5-i Series Compactor Sweeper from Atlantic Machinery, Inc. via Sourcewell Contract #122017-AMI for the amount of \$207,000 and authorize the necessary signatures. Voting in favor of the motion was Council Members Peters, Kinder, Peterson, Myrick, French, and Slaugh. Voting against the motion was Council Member Ballard. Motion passed with a majority vote.

**B. Utility CIP Fund Authorization** - Administrator Fleming noted that the two CIP Projects were part of the regular maintenance items in the two Utility Funds.

Motion made by Council Member Slaugh and seconded by Council Member Myrick to authorize expenditures up to \$60,000 for the 2020 Bare Main Steel Replacement Project from the Gas Utility CIP Fund (81). All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion made by Council Member Slaugh and seconded by Council Member Myrick to authorize expenditures up to \$120,000 for the 2020 Water Line Replacement Project from the Water Utility CIP Fund (82). All in favor. Motion carried.

**C. City Administrator Executive Search Firm-** Motion made by Council Member French and seconded by Council Member Peters to approve the contract with Strategic Government Resources (SGR) to provide executive search services and authorize the necessary signatures. All in favor. Motion carried.

## **COUNCIL & ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS**

**A. Council Member Peters -**

- None

**B. Council Member Ford–**

- Absent

**C. Council Member French –**

- Stated he would be unable to attend the meeting at the College on February 17th
- Noted that he doesn't mind being known as Grant City. If there are grants out there the City of Iola might as well go after them as any other City.

**D. Council Member Peterson–**

- None

**E. Council Member Ballard**

- I found some discrepancies with the maintenance cost sheet that Dan Leslie had presented on the street sweeper and the past City Council packets listing the payables. The staff needs to understand exactly what he is looking at to find an answer.
- Noted that a couple of employees have left the employ of the City of Iola in the last couple of months. The council needs to look at how things are being done and review the exit interviews. The council should look at taking back the hiring and firing duties from the City Administrator.

**F. Council Member Slaugh–**

- Suggested all of the Council Members submit their three top priorities at the next meeting for the Strategic Planning Meeting. Once they are discussed and a consensus has arrived at the staff will have a firm direction to move forward.

**G. Council Member Myrick–**

- Wished everyone a Happy Valentines Day.

**H. Council Member Kinder -**

- I would like more clarity on the repair numbers for the street sweeper.

**I. Mayor Wells**

- Reminded everyone that a special called meeting will be held on February 17th at the College. The discussion will be the new athletic field for the college.

**J. Administrator Fleming–**



- Noted that the Strategic Planning Meeting will be held on March 2nd at the college. A sandwich tray will be provided.
- He will gather the Council Members' top priorities and send them out in a Google Form for Council to come up with the top 3 priorities.

**DATE / TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

City Council Meeting 6:00 p.m. on Monday, February 24, 2020.

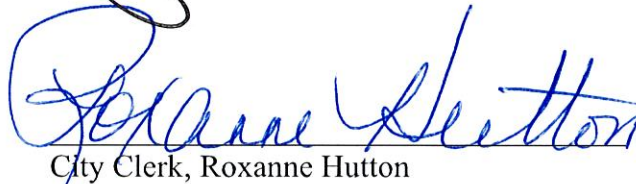
City Council Meeting 6:00 p.m. on Monday, March 2, 2020 (Strategic Planning)

**7:54 pm.** Motion made by Council Member Myrick and seconded by Council Member Peters to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Motion carried.

Approved by the City Council of the City of Iola, Kansas this 24th day of February 2020.



  
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Mayor Wells

  
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City Clerk, Roxanne Hutton