

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Iola was held on February 11, 2019, at 6:00 p.m., at the Park Community Building, located at 600 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, Ford, Peterson, Franklin, Martin, Mathew., and Myrick were present. Also present were Administrator Fleming, Assistant Administrator Schinstock, and City Clerk Hutton.

REVIEW & APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Council Member Myrick and seconded by Council Member Martin 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.

Gary McIntosh stated that he thinks there should be a central place for Iola to facilitate all of the events that are going on in Iola. Having a Master of Coordination would make things more open and accessible to everyone.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes Approval**
 - **January 28, 2019**
- B. Appropriations Approval**
- C. Boy Scouts of America Pack 3055 - Request**

Council Member Peters inquired about the invoices for the remodel at the warehouse. Administrator Fleming stated that the Gas/Water/ Sewer Superintendent's office had not

been remodeled the last time the other offices were remodeled. With the new GIS system the employees decided that a television screen would be more accessible and easier to read the maps on. With the purchase of the TV, they noticed the walls needed painted and then the decision was made to remodel the entire office and replace flooring in the main hall.

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

ROUND TABLE

A. Chamber & Economic Development Funding- Council has expressed its desire to discuss the Chamber and economic development and the related funding that each receives from the City of Iola. Administrator Fleming introduced Chamber President Shilo Eggers to give a brief overview of the chamber and what the future goals are.

- Chamber saving money with the sale of the old building and relocating to the Bowlus. This saves the Chamber money that was spent keeping the building up and paying for utilities.
- Being at the Bowlus with the new entrance gives them walk up traffic they might not otherwise have. It helps the Bowlus out since the school classrooms are no longer housed in the Bowlus.
- Chamber is in the process of trying to hire a new director. The pool has been narrowed down to two applicants.
- Chamber is in the process of revamping the Website and installing an app that business members can access to promote sales, and/or events going on at their business.
- Chamber is working on a new Visitors Guide that will be Countywide. The guide will be paid for by ads of local businesses. It will highlight local attractions in the area and will be distributed around the State of Kansas.
- The Chamber is also looking at unique photography from local amateur and professional photographers for the Visitor's Guide as well as the Chamber Website.

Administrator Fleming introduced Economic Development Director Bill Maness to give a brief overview of the program.

- 2018 was a good year for Iola and Allen County. Iola generated approximately \$99,000 more in sales tax from the previous year. Allen County generated approximately \$160,000 more in sales tax from the previous year.
- The unemployment rate for the County is down to 3%. The employee / Residential is the highest in the area other than Coffee County.
- People want to work in Allen County they just don't always live here. We need to do a study to determine how we get them here to live.

- He noted that it took four years to bring G&W grocery store to Iola. Economic Development is not a quick process.
- With the development of the grocery store, Iola Industries also built an apartment building. Cleaning up even more of a blighted property.
- They have been continuing to work with Sleep Inn and Suites to get them to the area, A potential for Ace Hardware to locate in Iola.
- They have requested and been approved for parts of Iola to be designated an Opportunity Zone. This allows individuals that owe a Capital Gains Tax to reinvest in property or businesses located within the area. The individual would benefit with a tax forgiveness.
- Iola's trails were just designated as part of the ABC trails. This was done as an extension of the Economic Development Network Thrive has made.
- Part of the US 169 Highway Corridor Coalition. They are working on making KDOT aware of the need for a four-lane highway.
- Tourism is one third of the State's Economy. Need to capitalize on this.
- Thrive has developed relationships with legislatures at the National and the State level.

Mayor Wells stated that discussions had come up with the Council during the Strategic Planning Sessions about what the money the city spends on Economic Development and the Chamber do for the City. What are some thoughts the Council has.

Council Member Ford noted that she is glad to see the Chamber step-up in electronic media. This is the best way to reach the current young generation.

Council Member Franklin was curious what the benefit in having an Economic Development Person and the Chamber.

Ms. Eggers stated that the Chamber is a Civic Organization and the work they do concentrates on helping small businesses.

She would like to see some strategic alliances, for example with Agriculture Tourism. There are a lot of hunters that come to our area. Why couldn't we align with local businesses to attract their wives to come with them. Give them a reason to come to us.

Mr. Maness stated it is important the City have a Chamber. The Chamber and the Economic Development are two individual roles.

As Economic Development Director, Mr. Maness sees his role to be proactive to get the businesses to Iola. He has heard individuals say we need another manufacturing plant. The area could not support it. Not enough people live within the City that the plant could employ. We need to draw people to the area.

Mr. Maness noted that the growth in Humboldt is due to locally grown business. That is the best investment because those individuals are committed to staying in the area.

Ms. Eggers stated that the communication with Thrive needs improvement. We all have the same goal. Making the community a place to come to. Need to work together on this goal.

Mr. Maness stated that together everyone needs to enhance the community.

Council Member Ford stated that having the SBDC in the area is great, however, we need to communicate it to all the individuals we can to give them the tools they need to grow business.

Council Member Myrick asked what their five-year goals are.

Ms. Eggers stated that her goals are for the Chamber to become stable. Possibly not have to rely on membership funding. Having a long-term director on board. Add profitability to local businesses.

Mr. Maness stated that he wants to better identify Iola as a destination city. Recruit a hotel to the area, have a public venue downtown that would hold 150-200 people. The City needs to step forward and claim ourselves.

Council Member Myrick asked if a developer had been identified to put in a housing area such as Cedarbrook. Mr. Maness noted that developers are usually looking for large parcels of land to build on, not necessarily a lot here and there. Talks have been in process with local builders to build homes on empty lots around town.

Council Member Ford noted that they needed to be starter homes for young couples not the income-driven tax credit homes.

Mayor Wells stated that it is an odd partnership. The County, The City of Iola, and Iola Industries contributing to the Economic Developer. Mr. Maness noted that Iola benefits from the partnership because it is the larger town and has more options.

Council Member Peterson stated that at the Thrive banquet it was announced that the budget was over \$1 million. Where does all of that money go? Mr. Maness stated that most of that funding is health based grant money.

Council Member Peterson asked how the tourism based business Thrive is wanting to get into will be funded and how does this fit into Thrive. Mr. Maness stated that if the County is willing to support it it would be a great way to promote the County with the network of partners Thrive has built.

Council Member Ballard asked what the salaries were for Thrive. Mr. Maness stated that he did not have that information off the top of his head. He could get it for the Council at a later date.

Council Member Ballard stated that he has heard for a long time that Thrive and the City have had communication problems.

Administrator Fleming stated that it could be improved. While some of the Economic Development information is confidential with potential businesses not a lot of information is divulged to the City Staff. They need to be a part of the conversation from the beginning in order to help facilitate infrastructure and other requests of the Council.

Council Member Ballard asked about cancelled meetings between Thrive and the City. Administrator Fleming stated that over 14 months there have been five cancelled Economic Development Meetings.

Ms. Eggers noted that the Executive Director of the Chamber will pay approximately \$35,000.

Council Member Ford stated that the position needed to be filled by someone who is passionate about the area.

Council Member Ballard asked both of the guests why the City shouldn't just hire an Economic Development Employee and not support the Thrive Economic Development Program and the Chamber.

Ms. Eggers stated that the City is a government entity and they will look out for their interests at all times. The Chamber is a voice for local businesses. An advocate for them.

Mr. Maness stated that it would be difficult to find someone that would work for the small amount of money the City would pay. Thrive also has an established network of opportunities.

Council Member Ballard asked Mr. Maness besides the G&W Grocery store what else has Thrive done as Iola's Economic Developers for Iola.

Mr. Maness stated that they have been in contact with a hardware store and a hotel for several years. They have only requested one increase in four years.

Jim Gilpin stated that from 1955-2015 the Economic Development for the area was handled by volunteers. Several towns within Southeast Kansas hired an Economic Developer on staff. Max Snodgrass used to volunteer following his retirement. Mr. Snodgrass would answer all of the incoming emails sent from Topeka. When his health no longer allowed him to do this the other members of the Iola Industries were unable to perform these tasks

due to their full time jobs. He thinks this is a good financial deal for the City combining with the County and Iola Industries to employ an Economic Developer through Thrive.

Gary McIntosh stated that there would be no Community Foundation for the area if it wasn't for Thrive.

Mayor Wells stated that the Council is not against either group they are just trying to do what is best for our citizens.

Donna Houser stated that the 2007 Chamber Director worked several hours on her off time because there is too much work to get done in a day. The city needs to work together with these two organizations. The Chamber needs the City's funding in order to grow.

Virginia Macha stated that she is excited to hear about the changes with the hiring of a new Chamber Director. She said this is not unique to us she sees it all over rural Kansas. The City needs to find the right message and get it out there. The City needs to stabilize the population and work on getting the Millennials home.

Council Member Ford stated that we need to build a sense of community to attract some of them home. The Chamber needs to hire the right person that will go above and beyond.

Council Member Martin stated that communication seems to be the problem between all of the entities.

Council Member Peters stated that Mr. Maness only brought up the good things that have been happening. We need to hear the bad side of things also – Gates losing employees, local hotel selling. How do we address these things?

Council Member Franklin stated that in the past these community groups ended up working against each other because of ego. Everyone involved needs to collaborate and move in the same direction.

Administrator Fleming stated the Council needs to decide what is their role in all of this. Do they want to be at the forefront leading the charge as a member of the community? Does the City want to help create the vision and common path that works to get everyone playing in the same sandbox?

Council Member Peterson asked how soon a Thrive Director would be hired. Mr. Maness stated that it is in the beginning stages.

Mayor Wells stated that there were all different opinions around the table: The one common thing is better communication. He asked the visitors and the Council to come up with some communication parameters and meet back next month.

B. Forfeiture Report - Police Chief Jared Warner - Chief Warner was present to report the Iola Police Departments State Forfeitures from January 26,2018 thru January 26, 2019. The report is presented to the City Council as the City Budgeting Authority in accordance with K.S.A. 60-4117 (d) (2).

Chief Warner stated that the funds have to be used for specialized training or equipment used for drug seizures. He noted the vehicles will be sold on Purple Wave.

Council Member Ballard asked about a canine unit for the department.

Chief Warner stated that it would cost a lot of money. The purchase of the animal, training for the animal and the officer and maintenance of the animal.

Council Member Peters wondered if one animal could be shared with the Sheriff's Office, Humboldt and Iola. Chief Warner did not know how to make that work.

Council Member Ford asked about grant opportunities for a K-9 Unit. Chief Warner stated that grants were very specific and equipment was not usually included in available grants.

Council asked staff to look into the costs of a K-9 Unit and bring it back for discussion.at a later meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Farm City Days Concert Series Support - Resolution 2019-08- Assistant Administrator Schinstock presented Resolution 2019-08 to the Council. The resolution states what items the City will provide for support of the Farm City Days Summer Concert Series on July 13, 2019.

Motion made by Council Member Martin and seconded by Council Member Myrick to approve Resolution #2019-08 approving City Staff support for the Farm City Days Summer Concert Series. All in favor. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Enhanced CMB - Ordinance #3485 - With the passage by the Kansas Legislature of the amended cereal malt beverage (CMB) laws to allow retailers with a CMB license to also sell beer containing not more than 6% alcohol by volume, which is referred to as "enhanced CMB" staff presented the Ordinance #3485.

The Ordinance will allow those currently possessing a CMB license to sell the Enhanced CMB within the City of Iola beginning April 1, 2019.

Motion made by Council Member Myrick and seconded by Council Member Martin to approve Ordinance #3485 - Enhanced CMB, which allows the sale of Enhanced CMB within the City of Iola beginning on April 1, 2019, and authorize the necessary signatures. All in favor. Motion carried.

COUNCIL & ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

A. Council Member Franklin –

- He inquired about the renovations at the warehouse and who approves those. Administrator Fleming stated that it was done in-house and the changes were made one at a time so it wasn't considered a large purchase project.

B. Council Member Myrick–

- None

C. Council Member Mathew –

- Appreciated that guests were present and thanked them for their time and input.

D. Mayor Wells–

- None

E. Council Member Ballard –

- Street crews did a great job on this last ice storm.
- Has received comments from citizens about high utility bills. Administrator Fleming noted that with the colder weather and the demand on Natural Gas it has caused increases to the Energy Cost Adjustments (ECA) utilized for the Electric and Gas Utilities. Also the holidays created some bills that consist of more days than normal.

F. Council Member Peterson–

- None

G. Council Member Ford–

- Encouraged everyone to stay warm and be safe. The weather is supposed to get bad again.

H. Council Member Peters –

- None

I. Council Member Martin -

- None

J. Administrator Fleming—

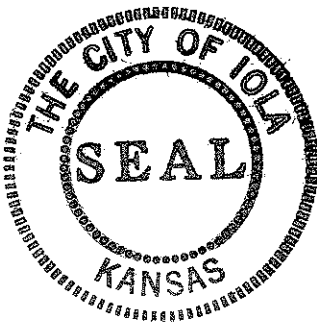
- He is working on the 2018 Year-End Financial Report and CIP Master List.

DATE / TIME OF NEXT MEETING

City Council Meeting 6:00 p.m. on Monday, February 25, 2019

7:48 pm. Motion made by Council Member Myrick and seconded by Council Member Martin to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Motion carried.

Approved by the City Council of the City of Iola, Kansas this 25th day of February 2019.



Mayor Wells

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jonathan Wells".

City Clerk, Roxanne Hutton

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roxanne Hutton".