

A regular meeting of the City Council of Iola was held on April 25, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., at the Park Community Building, 510 Park Avenue, Iola, Kansas.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

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

Mayor French, Council Members Peterson, Peters, D'Albini, Slaugh, Kinder, Shallah, Wicoff, and Lohman were present. Also present were City Administrator Rehder, Assistant Administrator Schinstock, and City Clerk Hutton.

REVIEW & APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Council Member Shalla and seconded by Council Member D'Albini to approve the agenda as presented. All in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Persons who wish to address the City Council regarding items on the agenda may do so as that agenda item is called. Persons who want to address the City Council regarding items not on the agenda and under the jurisdiction of the City Council may do so 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.

Nancy Ford and her daughter Regan Parks stated that her daughter turned three years old in March, and they wanted to sign her up to play T-Ball through the Recreation Department. The current policy says that to play, she had to be three no later than January 1st. They later discovered that a little boy she went to daycare with was able to sign up for T-Ball, and he turned three in March. The rules state that boys can play T-Ball if they turn three no later than May 1st. Ms. Ford and Ms. Parks noted that this rule doesn't seem fair.

Administrator Rehder stated that if the Council wants to change the policy with a consensus, it can be changed. However, he is not sure it can go into effect for this season.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes Approval

- **April 25, 2022, Council Meeting**

B. Appropriations Approval

Council Member D'Albini inquired about the abundance of void checks. City Clerk Hutton stated that with the retirement of Accounts Payable Clerk Troxel, a new employee is training in the process, and she put it into the printer backward. City Clerk Hutton also stated that the voided checks would be kept in the clerk's office for auditor's review.

Council Member Lohman made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Council Member Peters. All in favor. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

A.1336 N Walnut RHID - Resolution #2022-12- Administrator Rehder stated that the property owner has been working with Jonathon Goering from Thrive Allen County.

Administrator Rehder noted that the first step in this process is to complete a housing study; one was done last year and is before the Council for approval as part of the Resolution.

Mayor French asked if the City's participation in this particular project would prevent the City from applying for future RHIDs and grants.

Mr. Goering noted that this would not restrict the city on the number of grants or RHIDs it could participate in,

Council Member Kinder asked if the neighborhood would have extra costs due to this designation. Mr. Goering stated that this works differently. Once the work is finished, and the loan is paid off, the property is assessed the new tax value.

Council Member Slauch asked if the property could participate in the RHID and the Neighborhood Revitalization. Mr. Goering said that he believed that the property could not participate in both.

Council Member Shallah asked if the current wonder sold the property before the payoff, would the tax break be transferred to the new property owner. Mr. Goering noted that this tax break ends when the loan is paid in full.

Council Member D'Albini noted that when the Council approved the Zoning Change, the mayor stated that the city would benefit from utilities on this property more than the tax revenue.

Mr. Goering noted that this project would include financing parking lot improvements and sidewalks and possibly some internal electrical enhancements.

Administrator Rehder noted that usually, this program is used for infrastructure, such as getting utilities to the property. With the utilities in place, the Meo Group utilizes them for the parking lot and sidewalks.

Motion made by Council Member D'Albini and seconded by Council Member Kinder to approve Resolution 2022-12, beginning the process to create an RHID district for the 1336 N Walnut housing development. Council Voting against the motion was Council Member Slauch. Motion carried by a majority vote.

B. Solar Farm - Discussions- Scott Shreve was present to answer questions. Mr. Shreve had Rick Borry on the phone.

Mr. Borry explained that while the current plan shows a 4Mw solar farm, The city could choose to build a 2MW field now with another 2 Mw at a later date.

Mr. Borry explained slide three in detail. This slide discusses each step from beginning to end of the project.

Mr. Borry explained that a power purchase agreement would be made between Priority Power and the City. The deal would show a five-year buyout of the project. If the City has the funding to prepay a part of the project, this will reduce costs. If the city could save the budget for the project during the first five years, this would reduce the price with no interest on a bond issue.

The build would take approximately four months to get the project up and running by next summer. Having the project ready for the peak generating months would be most beneficial.

Mr. Shreve explained slide number four in detail. I was explaining that the goal of the solar farm is to reduce the City of Iola's exposure to the market, which has shown to be unpredictable this year.

Jonathon Goering explained that of the statewide new businesses searching for a location, four had required 80-100% of clean energy within the area they would like to build a

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business. Mr. Goering also stated that the requests have increased and have become part of the Economic Development Project with prospective companies.

Council Member Wicoff asked how long the inverter lasts, how much it costs to replace them, and how difficult would it be to get them and install them.

Mr. Borry explained that the inverters had lasted over twenty years so far. They have a five-year warranty. Each inverter has eight string-like pieces that make up the inverter. With a replacement within the warranty period, the company would send a box with the parts in it to be replaced. The City would then send the non-working ones back, and they would be rebuilt and sent back, or the new ones would remain in place. The cost of each box is approximately \$5,000.

Council Member Wicoff asked how the panels would hold up if a dust storm came through or a farmer burned off his pasture and how they would be cleaned.

Mr. Borry stated that the panels would be monitored by Priority Power from their offices; if a dust storm is approaching, the panels can be turned so that the glass panels are not facing up. Each year the panels are inspected on-site, and if necessary, a company specializing in this type of work would wash the panels.

Council Member Kinder asked about possible damage due to a tornado. Mr. Borry explained that the damage has been minimal with this panel type in high winds and hurricanes. In his experience, it is best to spend the money upfront on a better project and a better company to build the solar farm than having to repair it later.

The insurance cost for the completed farm is approximately \$0.25 per \$100.00 of the build cost. For the first five years, the insurance would be covered by Priority Power as stated within the contract.

Council Member Peterson stated that she had spoken with someone at the City of Baldwin. They have a 1MW solar panel. They are paying .58 per KWH, which translates to \$58.00 MW. This offer is \$40.00 MW.

Council Member Peterson mentioned a COOP that some cities are in with solar panels.

Council Member Peters stated that there is a COOP that has committed to buying power for 25 years.

Council Member D'Albini noted that he would like the City to move forward and get solar power.

Council Member Kinder stated that he agreed that this is the way to go. Having the ability to offer tax breaks to businesses is a bonus.

Mayor French noted that with the city's current capacity, it is possible that we could lose capacity if one of the generators goes out. Having the backup of the solar is reassuring.

Mayor French noted that Power Plant Superintendent Mike Phillips told the Council a couple of weeks ago that it would cost approximately \$15,000,000 to replace the Wartsillas. He said being a generating city does give us more power to keep costs down; having solar would provide us with more selling ability.

Council Member Shallah noted that she would like more ideas brought to the table.

Council Member Slaugh noted that it does make a statement to have green energy as part of the generation of the City. This is a good value, and it just depends on whether the city council is ready or not to take the next step.

Doug Strickler, the farmer that farms the ground near the Potential solar field, asked the Council if they had heard the alternative. Don't just jump in and decide until you have heard of other options. He noted that while they are attentive to the area they farm, they try to be cautious in keeping the dust down in the area with Russell Stovers across the road; they have been diligent about that. He questioned what it would cost 25-40 years from now to recycle the panels. Is the city prepared to do what will be required at the time when the system no longer runs?

Council Member Wicoff stated that while green energy is great, solar can not be controlled in need. The load is highest when Solar is at its peak during the day.

Council Member Lohman stated that it is cheaper than we would need to produce our power.

Council Member Slaugh stated that Priority Power had done the design work. The next step is for them to get bids for the project's construction and bring it back to the Council for approval. The entire project will be an open book.

It was a consensus that Council Members study the project more, and Mr. Shreve will obtain more information and report back to the Council later.

COUNCIL & ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

A. Council Member Peters -

- Council Member Peters had nothing to report.

B. Council Member Lohman—

- Council Member Lohman had nothing to report.

C. Council Member D’Albini—

- Council Member D’Albini reminded everyone that Mr. Masterson’s retirement reception would be at the College next Wednesday from 3:00-6:00 p.m.
- Council Member D’Albini noted that he hoped the Recreation Department could get the change in place for those that want to play t-ball this year.

D. Council Member Peterson—

- Council Member Peterson had nothing to report.

E. Council Member Wicoff-

- Council Member Wicoff stated that he was glad to be here.

F. Council Member Slaugh—

- Council Member Slaugh had nothing to report.

G. Council Member Shallah –

- Council Member Shallah also hopes that Staff can change the Recreation T-Ball policy for this year.

H. Council Member Kinder -

- Council Member KInder had nothing to report.

I. Mayor French

- Mayor French asked what the status was on the parking issue in front of the driveway near the Middle School. Staff informed Mayor French that the hope is that this problem will cure itself when the new elementary school opens and the fifth-grade students move from the Middle School to the new elementary school.
- Mayor French asked about staffing in the pool area. He saw several issues with the local swimming pools obtaining help. Administrator Rehder noted there hadn’t been any problems with Iola’s hiring.

J. Administrator Rehder

- Administrator Rehder had nothing to report.

DATE / TIME OF NEXT MEETING


City Council Meeting 6:00 p.m. on Monday, May 9, 2022

City Council Meeting 6:00 p.m. on Monday, May 23, 2022

7:58 **p.m.** Motion made by Council Member Peterson and seconded by Council Member D'Albini to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Motion carried

It was approved by the City Council of Iola, Kansas, on the 9th day of May 2022.





Mayor Steven French



City Clerk, Roxanne Hutton