

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Iola was held on May 26, 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, Kinder, Ford, Peterson, Slaugh, Myrick, Ballard, and French were present. Also, present Interim City Administrator Schinstock and City Clerk Hutton. Customer Assistant, Chelsey Beasley was present to film the meeting for Facebook live.

REVIEW & APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes Approval

- **May 11, 2020, Council Meeting**
- **May 14, 2020, Special Called Meeting**

B. Appropriations Approval

Council Member French noted that on page 2 of the May 11, 2020 meeting Miss Hartman was referred to Huffman. This will be corrected in the minutes. Motion made by Council Member Ballard to approve the consent agenda as amended. Motion seconded by Council Member Peterson. All in favor. Motion carried.

ROUNDTABLE

A. Thrive Allen County - Update - Thrive Allen County CEO, Lisse Regher gave an update on what's happening.

Miss Regher noted that with all of the changes within the Thrive Organization. One of the changes occurred in September when the Economic Director left the organization. At that time Ms. Regher took over the duties.

The Economic Development Group met to interview and eventually hire a new Economic Development Director. The new Director, Audrey Aguilar will start her new position on July 6th.

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Ms. Regher noted that she wants to get all three of the funding agencies together to discuss what success means to them and what their goals and priorities are for Economic Development.

Council Member Kinder asked how the immediate concern to the group is housing in and around Iola. Ms. Regher noted that it is an immediate concern. The current manufacturing and other businesses all state that finding employees to fill open positions is their hardest struggle. Increasing the job market will also mean increasing employees of which will need affordable housing.

Council Member Ford noted that some of the items that individuals are looking for in order to move here for a job include schools and housing.

Council Member Slaugh stated that Ms. Regher took over as CEO in April 2019 what do you anticipate for this part of the Thrive Organization. Ms. Regher noted that she would like to involve more partners from the communities such as bankers, small businesses, and municipalities. This would get them all involved and possibly discover wants and needs and maybe even some resources.

Council Member Slaugh asked what Ms. Regher thinks the Chamber of Commerce role is in the Economic Development Process. Ms. Regher noted that the Chamber's role is to support and promote local businesses. During the COVID 19 event, the Chamber has been beneficial in getting grants and funding information out to the businesses due to the fact she had contact information for them.

Council Member Slaugh asked Ms. Regher her thoughts on offering incentives to attract business. Ms. Regher noted that today communities are competing for businesses and factories and offering the best incentives could make or break a decision.

Council Member Ballard noted that with Interim Administrator Schinstock on the Economic Development Committee and Council Member French on the committee since December the communication with Thrive seems to be better.

Council Member French stated that Economic Development is steps that take time. He encouraged the Council to hang in there. Changes are coming.

Council Member Ballard stated that he was under the impression that at the City Council Strategic Planning meeting a letter was going to be sent to Thrive to discontinue financial support of the Economic Development Position.

Interim Administrator Schinstock noted that the outcome from the Strategic Planning Meeting was to discuss the funding at the 2021 Budget Meetings.

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Council Member Myrick stated that he was outspoken at the Strategic Planning Meeting about stopping the financial support to Thrive. Following his meeting with Ms. Regher earlier this month he feels better about the new ideas. He also feels like there will be better communication between all of the entities.

Council Member Ford agreed the lack of communication was a problem. She also agrees that we need to try the new person, let her prove what she can do. She also thinks it would benefit the program to have other communities within the County to contribute financially. Everyone in the county benefits from a new business.

Council Member Myrick stated that communication didn't happen. He stated that the current communication is better.

Council Member Kinder asked how much funding has Thrive brought into the City through grants and business. Ms. Regher stated that she did not have that number but would get that to the Council.

Council Member Slauch reminded the group not to compare Iola to Chanute; they have twice the population and therefore more money to use.

Council Member Kinder stated it would be good for the groups to come together and grow the communities. This will give all those involved a sense of community and pride.

Council Member Myrick noted that it would be beneficial to have joined meetings with other city council members to discuss what is working in one community and what is not working.

Council Member Ballard stated that one of the problems is every group wants to take credit for new business or programs.

Council Member Kinder stated that if everyone works together everyone should feel proud and take credit for the effort.

Council Member Peters asked Ms. Regher's ideas on where the labor force is going to come from with the expansion of Russell Stovers and possible new industry coming to town. Ms. Regher stated that it is a concern. Getting housing that is affordable and available will be a priority to attract people to the community.

Ms. Regher noted that Russell Stovers has gotten creative by asking employees what hours they would like to work. They now have varied schedules that attract more possible employees.

Ms. Regher thanked the group for their time. She stated that she will continue to keep the communication open.

NEW BUSINESS

A. STEM Facility Site Plan Approval -

Interim Administrator Shinstock presented the Site Plan to the Council. The Planning Commission met on May 20, 2020. The Planning Commission unanimously approved the proposed site plan with the understanding that modifications to the utility service lines will need to be made as requested by City staff.

Staff had some concerns about the stormwater runoff. The school did an engineering study as well as the City had engineers look over the study and sign off as approved.

Motion made by Council Member Myrick and seconded by Council Member Kinder to approve the site plan for the new STEM Building at Iola High School with the understanding that utility service line locations will be modified as requested by staff. All in favor. Motion carried.

B. Iola Elementary School Plat Approval - Code Enforcement Officer, Gregg Hutton, presented the proposed plat for the new Elementary School property at 203 N Kentucky Street. The Planning Commission unanimously approved the platting request with the condition that the currently dedicated easements will need to be modified.

Interim Administrator Schinstock, Code Enforcement Officer Hutton, and Utility Superintendents are having a phone call with the school engineers concerning the utilities, easements, and other concerns tomorrow.

Motion to approve the Iola Elementary School Addition Plat with the stipulation that the easements will be modified to meet City staff recommendations and authorize the necessary signatures made by Council Member Slaugh and seconded by Council Member Ballard. All in favor. Motion carried.

COUNCIL & ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

A. Council Member Peters -

- None

B. Council Member Ford-

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- I wanted to clarify the utility shut off 15-day deadline. Is it 15 calendar days or 15 business days. Mayor Wells took an informal poll and the consensus was that it is 15 calendar days. Individuals still on the cut-off list were sent letters that showed their total balance that would be due no later than the end of the day on June 15th. Disconnections will be done on June 16.
- Asked how much had been written off to date of the penalty amounts. City Clerk Hutton noted that over \$19,000 had been written off to date and there would be a couple more before the month is completed.
- She stated she had heard from some citizens that they like Facebook live for the meetings. Staff will check into the feasibility of continuing this.
- Asked when the swimming pool and playgrounds would be open. Interim City Administrator Shinstock stated that plans are to open the pool around the end of June or the first of July. This is dependent on the availability of lifeguards. The playground equipment has signs posted that they are closed, however, individuals are still playing on the equipment at their own risk.

C. Council Member French –

- I was contacted by the individual on North Cottonwood street that has installed solar panels again. Interim Administrator Shinstock stated that Scott Shreve, Energy Consultant for the City, suggested a meter that will monitor the actual solar power being used along with the city power. The meter has been ordered and will be installed when it arrives.
- It was noted by other Council Members that putting an ordinance in place would probably be best.
- Received a call from an individual that purchased a property on a Foreclosure. The previous owner had an outstanding utility bill that the buyer wasn't aware of. Per City Policy the bill must be paid prior to the new owner turning on utilities. A suggestion was made to place the outstanding balance as a tax assessment on the property. The staff will look into this.

D. Council Member Peterson–

- Asked about the opening of the pool. Interim Administrator Schinstock stated probably late June early July.

E. Council Member Ballard

- I appreciate the extra work from the Street and Alley and Electric Department during the last storm event.
- Asked about the metal poles on Marshmallow Lane. Interim Administrator Schinstock noted that they have been ordered, however, there is a pretty long delay so stronger wooden poles have been erected to carry the lines.

F. Council Member Slauch–

- None

G. Council Member Myrick–

- Heard from some citizens that live along Small Creek. that would like the city to reinforce the sides of the creek with concrete.
- Interim City Administrator Shinstock stated that a study had been done years ago and the cost was prohibitive to do the project. He will look into it.

H. Council Member Kinder -

- None

I. Mayor Wells -

- Spoke with SGR determined that the 8 individuals that had some but not all of the qualifications spelled out were sent the questionnaire. Council Members will review them and determine how they want to move forward.
- Appointed Council Members Ford, Peters, and Myrick to backup Council Member Peters on the Economic Development Committee.
- Will open up the Council Meeting to the public on June 8th. We will still do our best to social distance.

J. Interim City Administrator Schinstock–

- Noted that Human Resource Director, Carla Brown, will present the wage study findings at the next meeting. Staff will make recommendations to work the increases into the 2021 Budget.
- Noted that staff has completed storm cleanup from the May 3 storm event.
- We will close on the Cedarbrook property on Friday.

DATE / TIME OF NEXT MEETING

City Council Meeting 6:00 p.m. on Monday, June 8, 2020

City Council Meeting 6:00 p.m. on Monday, June 22, 2020

7:12 pm. Motion made by Council Member Myrick and seconded by Council Member Peters to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Motion carried.

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Approved by the City Council of the City of Iola, Kansas this 8th day of June 2020.



Joel P. Wells

Mayor Wells

Roxanne Hutton

City Clerk, Roxanne Hutton