

**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
February 11, 2019 - 5:30 p.m.**

**City Council Chambers, City Hall, 3rd Floor
1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island, IL**

Present: Mayor Pro Tem Dylan Parker and Alderman James Spurgetis

Alderman Dave Geenen arrived at 6:23 p.m.

Absent: Mayor Mike Thoms, Alderman Ivory D. Clark, Alderman Virgil J. Mayberry, Alderman Stephen L. Tollenaer, and Alderman Joshua Schipp

Staff: City Manager Randy Tweet, City Attorney Dave Morrison, City Clerk Judith Gilbert, and other City staff

2/11/2019 - Minutes

DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS' UPDATES

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Department director Chandler Poole reported that development agreements for Agrisolutions and GTI are out for review; TIF agreements for Ms. Brimani's and QC Pancake House are also out for review. Mr. Poole said the agreement with the Rock Island Housing Authority is going to their attorney. City Attorney Dave Morrison said it should also be brought to Council for approval in case there are any disagreements about enforcement. Mr. Poole said the agreement spells out what the Housing Authority is required to do before the City will sign documents on their behalf (for HUD funds). Sam Estep has received New Market Tax Credits for the Best Building project. Leases are out for the DeSoto building, one for the wood turners and one for the potters. Mr. Poole stated they are working with their consultant on the CIRLF program; at this time they are not offering CIRLF loans. They are working on the policies and procedures to be sure the program is being done right per HUD requirements. Mr. Poole reported that the Home Rehab Program policies and procedures have been completed; the program is being advertised; and they have one person asking for an application.

Mr. Poole said they are creating a Landlord Rehab Program. Mayor Pro Tem Parker asked if the program is the carrot and MUNICES code enforcement is the stick. Mr. Poole responded yes and it is another opportunity for landlords to try and fix property issues. Mayor Pro Tem Parker asked if it was in partnership with the absentee landlord ordinance or the vacant property registration. Mr. Poole replied his staff is going through the rental inspection program ordinance in detail for updating. Mr. Morrison said one of the big violators is Jones Lease Properties, but they are currently in Chapter 11 bankruptcy. He added that once they make it through their bankruptcy, there will be an enforceable agreement through state court.

Alderman Spurgetis said he appreciates all of the departments finding efficiencies and cutting back on expenses. He wanted to know if the department had any ideas for raising more revenues. Mr. Poole responded they are raising their inspection fees and health inspection fees which needed to be done. He added they are also looking at adjusting rental inspection fees and planning and zoning fees which will be coming soon. They are now looking at how they compare to other cities.

Mayor Pro Tem Parker asked if the department will be doing the heritage tourism. City Manager Randy Tweet said they will put something together this month. He reported the STAR committee has a meeting this week; it has been absorbed into the LEED program. Mr. Tweet said Finance Director Stephanie Masson is on the committee and she did this when she was in Park Forest.

Mayor Pro Tem Parker asked about the economic mobility goal and a possible grant through John Deere. Mr. Tweet said they are looking at a grant to target a certain area. He asked MLK Center Director Jerry Jones to come up and speak about the grant. Mr. Jones reported they presented a concept to John Deere with workforce development as a tool of economic development. The feedback from Deere was that it was a great idea, but Deere wants them to refine the focus. Mr. Jones explained there is a push from HUD to focus the City's CDBG funds in a high need area. They will be targeting that area and focusing on workforce development and getting them ready to work and also encouraging them to stay in the neighborhood. Mr. Tweet said the first phase would probably be a study to determine what kinds of jobs do the target residents want. Mr. Jones said they will meet with Deere in March to talk about the program they want and hopefully get approval from the Deere board in May. Mayor Pro Tem Parker asked if the City would be doing the study or if it would be hired out. Mr. Jones replied they will be talking to Deere about that. Mr. Jones said they want the study to be included in the grant rather than the City trying to finance it.

Mayor Pro Tem Parker asked about the Old Country Market property. Mr. Tweet gave an update; they know now what it will take to tear the building down or to leave it up. The owner got one estimate of \$175,000 for what it would cost to make the building safe to use (not a rehab of the building); he is getting another estimate and will provide the City with all of the information. Mr. Tweet said the City has done as much as they can right now.

Mayor Pro Tem Parker asked about the Downtown plan update coming next month. Mr. Tweet said it's just a review to see what's appropriate. Mayor Pro Tem Parker said he has discussed it at length with Eric Reader. Mr. Tweet said they will review the last plan and then engage with some of the downtown stakeholders. Mr. Poole said they have two items done. They are working on the National Register designation with a consultant (with a state grant to pay for the consultant); and the Streetscape program with public meetings completed and Public Works is now doing a test area.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Interim Public Works Director Mike Bartels reported the current street funding projects are the 18th Avenue and 38th Street resurfacing projects. The 18th Avenue project was started last year and will continue this year. A reconstruction meeting was held last Friday for the 38th Street project; the contractor hopes to start in late March depending on the weather. This year, Public Works hopes to do additional repairs and pavement patching on the Parkway in southwest Rock Island. Mr. Bartels said they have had a lot of lighting issues on the 11th Street corridor. They are trying to get MFT funds for that project. They finally got plans back and hope to bid out the project this year. The project will take care of the underground burnout issues, the conduit, and replace all of the lighting to LED from 25th Avenue to 42nd Avenue. Mr. Bartels said they will be using MFT funds for their maintenance programs. They hope to do a resurfacing project from the foot of the Centennial Bridge at 15th Street to 4th or 5th Avenue. He said it will be difficult to do with the re-routing of the I-74 bridge, but the potholes have gotten out of hand and they're no longer fixable. They hope to apply some MFT funds towards the project and it will also require IDOT approval. They also have this year's brick patching program with several locations picked out already.

Mr. Bartels reported on future projects including the 31st Avenue resurfacing from the Rock Island Parkway to 11th Street. The project is set for 2020 with an 80/20 match. They are also

working on the renewable energy for city infrastructure goal with scheduling MidAmerican energy audits with their consultant. Mr. Bartels said they are waiting to get all of the energy audits back. They are getting back cost estimates on replacing mechanicals. He said they are also looking at lighting replacements to be done in-house. They will do a cost-analysis to see if they can complete the project quickly enough to get the rebates to be beneficial or to include in the energy proposal. Mr. Bartels said in March they will get back to the task force and interview contractors. In April, they will meet with Finance to get funding recommendations and then bring a recommendation back to Council.

Mr. Bartels said some ongoing activities have been the snow and ice and water main breaks. It has been challenging, but they are getting the job done. They have had meetings with the Rock Island Arsenal regarding the refuse component and providing services for refuse collection on the Arsenal. It will be another 80 residential stops with the City's in-house trash collection; they are partnering with Moline who will be doing the recycling pick-ups and additional services of special pick-ups along with appliances. Mr. Bartels said it would be coming to Council soon for discussion. Alderman Spurgetis asked if it was fee for service. Mr. Bartels responded it would be a reduced rate, but similar to the City's residential fee; there would be less services provided to Arsenal customers (no leaf collection or special pick-ups). Alderman Spurgetis asked if the City had enough resources without spending more money. Mr. Bartels responded yes; they already did a test run and the trash collection stops can be done in 45 minutes.

Mr. Bartels said the Water Filtration building is ongoing. He has also had several meetings with the new marina management. They are trying to get a restaurant at the marina. They are also having issues with the 400 dock due to age and the weather. They are working on a plan to bring to Council. They are also working with CED for the downtown streetscape project and lighting. They have a concept and the engineering department is working on a plan and cost estimate to get one test block done on the east side of 20th Street. They hope to do the pavement repairs in-house.

Alderman Spurgetis asked Mr. Bartels to email him a summary of his report for the 11th Street lighting project. He would like the information when people ask what's going on. Mayor Pro Tem Parker thanked Mr. Bartels and his department for all their hard work this winter.

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Department director John Gripp reported they review their fees on an annual basis. He said they always look for ways to generate more revenue and increase the experience of their program. They have a new programming / special event policy and budget sheet to ensure all programs and events cover all of the department's direct and indirect costs; otherwise managers have to come up with alternate funding sources. They have created their 2019 Action Plan. The department has worked on regional collaboration to reduce costs including developing relationships with Rock Island schools, the Rock Island County Forest Preserve, Moline Parks and Rec, all of their Friends groups, Augustana College, and travel sports groups. With regard to the economic mobility goal, they have provided opportunities for low to moderate income residents with the First Tee program which served over 200 kids last year. They have also established a Parks and Rec Scholarship fund for kids and families that need assistance in paying for programs and created an income-based sliding scale for RIFAC membership. Mr. Gripp spoke about the goal to evaluate alternate funding mechanisms which he said the department does on a daily basis through grant opportunities, partnerships, sponsorships, and donations. They have grown several strong Friends groups which has led to a lot of alternate funding for facilities upgrades including two recent grants totaling over \$500,000 for Douglas Park. Mr. Gripp said they hold several community meetings throughout the year as well conduct dozens of surveys of their customers and Rock Island residents every year, develop private and public partnerships, and maintain an open door policy.

Alderman Spurgetis asked about the Hauberg Center. Mr. Gripp explained that it is owned by the City, but they have an operational agreement with the Friends of Hauberg Civic Center to run it; the Parks Department does the maintenance for the facility. Alderman Spurgetis asked what is coming up with regard to the use of the property and the building. Mr. Gripp responded in 2019, they have more weddings and receptions booked than they did in 2018. They have quite a following with their programming and special events. He reported the second floor wood floors have been rehabbed; and with funds from CED, they will be upgrading the electrical service. They also will have a cooperative program with the Botanical Center to teach children about gardening and flowers; and Sprouting Minds will do the terrace gardens in the back.

Mayor Pro Tem Parker asked if Parks and Rec staff are used with Hauberg. Mr. Gripp replied that they started out using department staff, but as Hauberg staff became trained, they took over and do it themselves now. The Parks Department is always available for help.

LIBRARY DEPARTMENT

Library Director Angela Campbell said in the library world, they have stopped charging for everything including fines and fees. She reported on their new Angel Fine Tree program held last year; fines of over \$2,000 were paid off by other people. They will repeat the program this year. She is monitoring how other Illinois libraries are not charging for fines. They engage in regional collaboration through the PrairieCat Consortium for their catalog system and also as members of RAILS (Reaching Across Illinois Library System). Ms. Campbell sits on the Finance Committee of the PrairieCat Consortium and they are restructuring the fee formula to be more equitable to the 173 libraries who are members. They are also looking at how to get into schools and partner with them. She said they do their best to support City goals.

Alderman Spurgetis asked about the bookmobile and when it is scheduled. Ms. Campbell responded they are looking for grant funding; she hopes the census will help with funding. The library board will be discussing at their February meeting the following items: the bookmobile, the 2nd floor renovation of the downtown library, and the move to a different building for the central library. They only have a limited amount of money. She hopes she will have more direction after that meeting. Alderman Spurgetis asked when they will be closing the 30/31 library. Ms. Campbell replied they hope by the end of the year. She said they hope to at least have a plan to move within the next few years. The feedback from the community conversations they have been hosting recently has been as long as there is a commitment in the near future for a replacement building. Ms. Campbell discussed the community leadership sessions with potential partners that will be happening soon and Council will be invited.

MARTIN LUTHER KING CENTER

Center Director Jerry Jones said he will focus on what is happening with their board. The focus is developing it to be a governing board. They hope to raise revenues by reviewing the fees for the banquet room. They have seen growth in the revenues from \$19,000 to \$30,000. With improvements made possible by CIP, they hope to get to market rates. A resource development officer has been hired. Two grants covered that cost last year. This year, they will sustain the cost, but they are looking for dollars to sustain that position and create unrestricted revenue to develop programming for the community they serve. Mr. Jones asked for Council to like their Facebook page and share it with others.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Finance Director Stephanie Masson reported they are working on the 2018 audit and trying to finalize the December 31 financial statements. She plans to give the 4th Quarter Financial Report on March 4. Another big project for the department this year is recruitment. They saved

money last year by not filling the Budget Coordinator position; they will fill it this year with a lower position. Ms. Masson reported the billing manager is retiring at the end of May so the department will be restructured again. In 2019, they will need to restructure the Watchtower bond debt coming up and there is a call date for the Columbia Park C bonds. Ms. Masson said last year, they met with the City's financial advisor and discussed a revamping of the debt supported by the Gaming revenues. She said this will be the year of policies as many of the City's policies are outdated; for example, purchasing policies, travel and expense reimbursement policies, and investment policies.

Ms. Masson discussed the legislative priorities in Springfield with many bills regarding pension reform. She said there are so many pros and cons to the different pension bills. She is spending more time working with the pension boards due to vacancies. Other legislative priorities will be minimum wage which can impact the City's operations. Ms. Masson said the property tax freeze is starting to come up again too which could affect the City.

Ms. Masson said that with regard to Alderman Spurgetis' concern about revenues, she said the Finance Department is always trying to be more efficient and save money and look at the fees being charged and determining what is the City's core service. They will be looking at changes to the City's hotel tax and improved enforcement of the tax. They will also look at parking enforcement and parking permits; it has been a long time since they were reviewed and there is a cost to administer the programs.

Alderman Spurgetis asked if there is a formal or structured program for estate giving or donations to the City and who they should contact. Ms. Masson said the City is already a recipient of two trusts. She responded they would need to consult their financial and tax advisors; she said it is not the City's role to organize that, but the City would be happy to take any money. Alderman Spurgetis asked if there was a tactful way to inform the public. Ms. Masson said there are also the Library and Parks Foundations. City Attorney Morrison gave the example of public television, but the City does not want to be perceived as having a conflict.

Mayor Pro Tem Parker asked if the hotel/motel tax goes in the General Fund. Ms. Masson replied it does, but about 1% goes to the Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau. Mr. Tweet said pensions were a topic at the recent City and County Managers conference he attended. He reported that the number one factor Moody's looks at in rating municipalities are their pension obligations. It is a huge impact to every city in Illinois. Mr. Tweet said the seven pension bills introduced so far are just kicking the can down the road and the ratings services have no interest in that. The ability for the 600 pension funds to combine is gaining some traction.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police Chief VenHuizen distributed a handout with crime statistics. He explained the two graphs for UCI statistics. One graph shows the Part 1 eight index crimes that are reported and those have been trending downward for several years especially compared to the high years. The total number of crimes for 2018 was 1096 and that number is below the numbers for 2017 and 2016. The second graph shows the numbers for the three violent crimes (murder, sexual assault, and aggravated assault) reported and those numbers are significantly down; these are the lowest numbers he has ever seen.

Alderman Geenen asked if as a region, are the numbers down. Chief VenHuizen referenced a report in the Quad City Times and the Dispatch Argus with Iowa crimes and Illinois crimes. He said there are variations within each agency. Chief VenHuizen explained the UCI crime reporting system.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief Yerkey discussed the cardiac arrest procedures and they are continuing to see positive results from that. The percentage of getting a pulse back increased in 2018 and the City's average is well above the national average. Just this morning, they had another patient where they were able to get a pulse back. Chief Yerkey reported that last month they received the new breathing apparatus, an important life-saving tool for firefighters, which required a 10% match; it was mostly funded by the federal government. Chief Yerkey reported that ambulance fees were increased a year and a half ago. The department billed about \$1.4 million in fees, but they only collect about 40%. They are also looking at other fees for service.

Alderman Spurgetis asked if the staff overtime has improved. Chief Yerkey responded they have to get to full staff to see results; they are short three firefighters now. Mr. Tweet explained they have not been to full staff in three years. Mayor Pro Tem Parker said his Explorers program can get the pipeline going. Mr. Tweet said the problem is that people are on so many lists and will leave when they get called from another list in their hometown. Mr. Tweet said it is very difficult to keep people.

The study session concluded at 6:34 p.m.

Judith H. Gilbert, City Clerk