

City of Scottsbluff, Nebraska

Monday, April 7, 2014

Regular Meeting

Item Consent1

Approve the minutes of the March 31, 2014 Regular Meeting.

Staff Contact: Cindy Dickinson, City Clerk

Regular Meeting
March 31, 2014

The Scottsbluff City Council met in a regular meeting on Monday, March 31, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 2525 Circle Drive, Scottsbluff. A notice of the meeting had been published on March 28, 2014, in the Star Herald, a newspaper published and of general circulation in the city. The notice stated the date, hour and place of the meeting, that the meeting would be open to the public. That anyone with a disability desiring reasonable accommodation to attend the council meeting should contact the city clerk's office, and that an agenda of the meeting kept continuously current was available for public inspection at the office of the city clerk in City Hall; provided, the city council could modify the agenda at the meeting if it determined that an emergency so required. A similar notice, together with a copy of the agenda, also had been delivered to each council member, made available to radio stations KNEB, KMOR, KOAQ, and television stations KSTF and KDUH, and the Star Herald. The notice was also available on the City's website on March 28, 2014. An agenda kept continuously current was available for public inspection at the office of the city clerk at all times from publication of the notice to the time of the meeting.

Mayor Randy Meininger presided and City Clerk Dickinson recorded the proceedings. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, led by Benjamin of Boy Scout Pack 5 who is working on his Citizenship badge. Mayor Meininger welcomed everyone in attendance and encouraged all citizens to participate in the council meeting asking those wishing to speak to come to the microphone and state their name and address for the record. Mayor Meininger informed those in attendance that a copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is posted in the back of the room on the west wall for the public's review. The following Council Members were present: Raymond Gonzales, Mark McCarthy, Randy Meininger, Scott Shaver and Liz Hilyard. Absent: None.

Mayor Meininger asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were none. Mayor Meininger asked if any citizens with business not scheduled on the agenda wished to include an item providing the City Council determines the item requires emergency action. There were none.

Moved by Council Member Shaver, seconded by Council Member Hilyard, that "the minutes of the March 17, 2014 Regular Meeting be approved," "YEAS", Gonzales, McCarthy, Meininger, Shaver and Hilyard, "NAYS" None. Absent: None.

City Manager Kuckkahn explained that the contract with the Softball Coordinator is an annual contract for the management of softball teams during the summer season. Moved by Council Member Hilyard, seconded by Council Member Shaver, "to approve the contract with Andrew Hayward as the Softball Coordinator and authorize the Mayor to execute the contract," "YEAS", Gonzales, McCarthy, Meininger, Shaver and Hilyard, "NAYS" None. Absent: None.

Regarding the presentation of the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan from Drop Seed Studios, Assistant City Manager Nathan Johnson, explained that this is a conceptual plan only and there will be many considerations before the plan is actually implemented. Mr. Tom Bentley with Dropseed gave an overview of the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan, highlighting the concept of Community and Commerce, the Broadway intersections, increased visibility, greening of the streets, brandings, replacing the brick, accommodate the growing bicycle population, accenting the front of the Midwest Theater, parking landscape, accessible parking stalls, tree planters, and many other enhancements. Another concept Mr. Bentley presented was that of closing a portion of 18th Street from Broadway to 1st Ave. and creating a civic plaza area.

Mayor Meininger commented that these plans will be further discussed by the City Council during the upcoming budget workshop sessions.

Following the presentation a number of citizens approached the Council with their input. Theresa Lowe, whose insurance office is on 18th Street voiced her concern about closing that portion of the street, saying that customers will have a difficult time parking by her business and the value of her property will decrease. Renee Barry discussed the difficulty she has parking so she can use the ramp on her van for wheelchair use. Bricks, curbs, and bushes along the side streets and Broadway currently pose a problem for accessibility. She is glad that there will be more accessible parking and appreciates the efforts by the city to make changes. Monette Ross explained the need for accessible public restrooms downtown and also asked the Council to examine the ramps and side streets for accessibility. Connie Frank owns three buildings downtown and talked about the need for the extra parking on 18th Street, discouraging pursuit of the concept to close one block of 18th Street. She also informed the Council of the constant problems with vandalism at the 18th Street Mini Park and the need for a public restroom at the park. The owner of Bianco and Company explained a problem with delivery trucks blocking traffic and the additional complications that would occur if 18th Street were closed forcing trucks to use the alley. Billy Estes, Midwest Theater, spoke in favor of the overall proposal, and expressed a need for more parking spaces. He also clarified, that if the street by the mini park were blocked, it would accommodate many more events than just the Farmers Market which is held on Saturday's during the summer months. Dick Ross also explained the lack of handicap parking and need for more accessible drop off spaces. Bruce Rolls, Western Trails Sports, added that he was also concerned about the reduced parking spaces if 18th Street were closed.

At 6:50 p.m. the Council took a five minutes recess. The Council reconvened at 6:55 p.m. with the following members present: Raymond Gonzales, Mark McCarthy, Randy Meininger, Scott Shaver and Liz Hilyard. Absent: None.

Mr. Kuckkahn explained that the next presentations included the Police and Fire Departments, which are two core, essential departments in the city. Chief of Police, Kevin Spencer, gave an informative report of the many activities in the Police Department, which included their Mission/Vision Statement, Department Goals, Personnel Distribution, Support Services Division, Activity Summaries, Offenses and Statistics, Revenues, School Resource Officers and Animal Control.

Chief Spencer discussed the plan to increase the number of Investigators by two more officers. He also discussed the technology they have incorporated at the Emergency Operation Center, including a Smart Board and in-car videos in each patrol car. Chief Spencer discussed some of the issues they have had with Sleuth, their records management program. The program cannot be connected with Scotts Bluff County, and has actually created more work for the department. Since there is a need for a new CAD system, Council will discuss this further during the next budget work session.

In 2013, the department responded to 13,679 calls, 488 calls per officer. They continue to work on the Vesper Case, and Chief Spencer recently presented the case to a group of forensic experts at the Vidocq Society. The department has seen a 100% increase of cases involving medical marijuana from Colorado and are working closing with the drug task force.

An original copy of the Police Department report will be filed with the City Clerk's office for public review.

Council Member Gonzales expressed a need to add some of the Police Department issues back on the agenda to discuss individual items in more detail.

Mayor Meininger invited residents to address the council regarding Public Comments at this time. As a concerned citizen, Tom Carson approached the council regarding yard waste containers and the new regulation requiring all yard waste roll-out containers to be moved to the street rather than the alley. He is not in favor of this new system and asked the Council and Staff to consider changing back to the alley pick up location.

Fire Chief Dana Miller gave his annual report to the Council highlighting the following topics: Mission Statement, yearly response statistics, structure fire loss values, hours when building fires occurred, five year fire experience, calls by day of week, aid given and received, time spent on scenes, ISO (Insurance Services Survey), current apparatus inventory, special team trainings, fire prevention and safety trainings, and the Scottsbluff Fire Department history.

Chief Miller expounded on the amount of training his department receives on self-rescue, water rescue, prevention and education. He also pointed out the effect of the shift schedules for the last 5 ½ years that they have been short by one staff member. He explained that the process of covering the shifts has caused stress within the department. Council Member Shaver commented that he thought the Council had authorized filling the 15th firefighter position and asked why it had not been filled.

City Manager Kuckkahn commented that Council authorized budgeting for the position, however they wanted an explanation to determine the need for a 15th position. In order to streamline the process, the testing has been completed through the Civil Service Commission, and now they have some candidates on the qualifications list, so we can hire quickly. Mr. Kuckkahn explained that we recognized there was a reduction in staff, and wanted to review the comparison with other Fire Departments. There are national trends to be examined as well. Council Member Shaver reiterated that he understood that it was authorized and thinks the position should be filled now.

An original copy of the Police Department report will be filed with the City Clerk's office for public review.

Council Member Gonzales expressed his appreciation of the informative report and would like to review some of the Fire Department issues at future Council meetings.

Under Council Reports, Mayor Meininger reported that the Youth Council Representatives will be meeting with the Community Connection group (previously Call to Action).

Moved by Council Member Shaver, seconded by Council Member McCarthy, "to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m." "YEAS", Gonzales, McCarthy, Meininger, Shaver and Hilyard, "NAYS" None. Absent: None.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk