

City Council Minutes: November 23, 2009 (Special Mtg.)

CITY OF FULTON

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

NOVEMBER 23, 2009

5:30PM

Mayor Russell called the meeting to order and directed the clerk to call the roll. On roll call, Mayor Larry Russell, Aldermen Charles Dykstra, Gene Field, Merle Sterenberg, Charlie Letcher, Warren Juist, Wes Letcher, Bill Loerop and Ron Roels answered present. Also in attendance were Randy Balk - City Administrator, Jim Rhoades - Chief of Police and Dan Clark - Public Works Director.

Ald. Loerop addressed the council and the public in attendance regarding the proposed tax levy options. He stated he had done some homework after Option A was chosen on Saturday, November 14, 2009. He requested the council meet tonight to consider public input. He said he was not sure how he was going to vote because he wanted feedback from the public and other council members.

Loerop said he is concerned about the tort insurance (unemployment, workers comp, liability and general insurance) amount levied. Tax levy Option A is \$52,124 for tort and Option B and C are \$90,638. The estimates for next year are approximately \$90,000. He believes that the general ledger balance could be down \$200,000 at the end of this fiscal year. Cutting costs is not even enough, Loerop said, more revenue is need.

Ald. Roels said he thinks it's the wrong time to increase property taxes. Fund reserves have been built up and the city should spend down the reserves. Roels said part of the problem is the economic development fund which had to borrow from the general fund to make loan payments. If we sold property, the general fund would be reimbursed from the economic development fund.

Randy Balk distributed a hand out of miscellaneous information: city tax rates for Whiteside County, no salary increases for next fiscal year which is a cost savings of \$41,000 and state revenue shortfalls projected to be in the range of \$60,000 to \$90,000.

Fulton resident Don Hall asked what the salary increases were in the last 12 months. The answer was an average of 3.5%. Hall then asked what cuts had been made in the current year's budget. Ald. Roels responded: dues, training and travel expenditures and the zoning officer was laid off.

Fulton resident and business owner Mike Ottens said that from a business owner's point of view more options to cut expenses should be considered. Ottens said now is not the time to raise taxes.

Fulton resident Ken Ottens said when he read in the paper that the city was considering 3 options for raising taxes he and his neighbors came up with some ideas. He handed the list of ideas to each council member. He stated that he has not received a paycheck in 2 1/2 years because he was hurt on the job.

Fulton resident Bob Dykema would rather see a municipal utility tax. Mike Ottens said he would support a municipal utility tax.

Ald. Roels moved, seconded by Ald. Juist to move forward with Tax Levy Option A. The council had voted to prepare an Ordinance for Tax Levy Option A at a previous meeting on November 14, 2009. At the November 16, 2009 meeting Ald.

Loerop asked the council to meet again to discuss the tax levy options with the public. After hearing public input, the general consensus was that the council would still support Option A, therefore it was not necessary to vote on it again. The motion was withdrawn by Ald. Roels.

The council decided to leave both December council meeting dates as they were rather than meeting one time on December 14th.

Ald. Roels moved, seconded by Ald. W. Letcher to approve employee Christmas bonuses in the amount of \$200 for full time employees and \$100 for part time employees. Roll call vote/Ald. Roels, Loerop, W. Letcher, Juist and Field voted yes/Ald. C. Letcher, Sterenberg and Dykstra voted no/motion carried. Ald. Dykstra said the council should forego the bonus as a show of support to the public. Ald. C. Letcher said he would have suggested a 50% reduction in the bonus amounts.

Randy Balk informed those present that the engineering firm doing the aerial mapping will soon be doing the flyover. He said people may have noticed painted markings around town, which have been done in preparation for the flyover.

Ald. Loerop moved, seconded by Ald. Roels to approve the Mayor sending letters of support for the proposed federal prison in Thomson, Illinois. Roll call vote/all yes/motion carried.

Ald. C. Letcher moved, seconded by Ald. W. Letcher to adjourn. Voice vote/all yes/motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:58pm.

Minutes recorded by,

Linda Hollis

City Clerk