

January 17, 2024

The Rock Port Board of Aldermen met on Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. with Mayor Amy Thomas presiding. Board members present were Lisa Farmer, Kelley Herron, Kory Paris, and Raechel Schoonover. Also present was Chief of Police Derek Morriss, Utility Office Manager Terri McGuire, City Clerk Emily Schulte, Deputy Clerk Tierra Stoner, Lead Laborer Jarod Hudson, and Laborer Dennis Sherlock. Visitors were Mike Klosek Sr., Mike Klosek III, Julie Burke, and Gary McGuire.

Mayor Amy Thomas called the meeting to order then led the meeting in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Paris moved to approve the meeting agenda. Herron seconded. All votes aye.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Schoonover moved to approve the December 19, 2023 & January 10, 2024 meeting minutes. Herron seconded. All votes aye.

Park Board – ARPA Funds Request

Park Board liaison Paris presented a proposal to utilize remaining ARPA funds at the city park. The request included a play structure, metal picnic tables, and steel trash cans. Paris stated they hadn't received all the price quotes back yet, but they could have it next month if the board was interested in hearing more.

The board is open to considering the request and asked that the Park Board bring quotes for each item next month.

Paris was also excited to report that Rock Port Youth Athletic Association will be getting new bleachers for the south ball field.

Klosek's LLC – Trash Contract

Kloseks were in attendance to discuss the city's contract for trash service. With costs increasing they are proposing the following: a 3-year renewal contract, the first year at a 30% increase of the current price, then another \$1.00 per year increase the remaining 2 years. The cost for city government facilities would not see an increase.

Current Residential Monthly Rate	
Now through June 30, 2024	\$13.74
Proposed Residential Monthly Rate	
July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025	\$17.86
July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026	\$18.86
July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027	\$19.86

They wanted to relay that though there were times they could have enforced increases due to rises in fuel prices within this last contract term, they never did. Klosek Sr. also would like to see the following item changed within the contract:

16. All solid waste collected by Contractor shall be disposed of at a facility, disposal area, or sanitary landfill approved by City and complying with all state and federal laws.

Farmer motioned to approve the suggested changes. Motion died for lack of a second.

Paris requested additional time for contract amendment consideration. Contract tabled until the February meeting.

City Consent Agenda

Paris moved to approve the City financial statements, accounts payables, tax report, delinquent tax list, the City Clerk, Chief of Police, all board reports. Herron seconded. All votes aye.

Utility Consent Agenda

Paris moved to approve the Utility financial statements, accounts payables, purchased power and water statements, take or pay water use report, water loss reports, Utility Office Manager report and City Superintendent report. Schoonover seconded. Herron, Paris, & Schoonover votes aye. Farmer abstains.

Park Board Appointment

Mayor Thomas' appointment of Jaclyn Lutz to the vacant Park Board position was considered.

Paris moved to approve Mayor Thomas' appointment of Jaclyn Lutz to the Park Board. Herron seconded. All votes aye.

Lead & Service Line Bids

Lead Laborer Hudson relayed that there are currently 8 bids. After only a brief amount of time to consider proposals, his gave his opinion on the best option for the city.

Herron moved to approve moving forward with Hudson's recommendation. Paris seconded. All votes aye.

Hudson will contact DNR to inquire about the next steps.

Rock Port Fire Department Annual Report

The annual report submitted by the Rock Port Fire Department was presented.

Paris moved to approve the Rock Port Fire Department annual report. Herron seconded. All votes aye.

RenoSys Pool Liner Contract

The city is still awaiting a response to the latest letter. Item tabled.

Park Maintenance Agreement

Paris relayed that the park is prepared to move forward putting their mowing out for bid. Hudson inquired if any other changes were being made to the agreement. Paris relayed that only mowing has been altered from the agreement at this time, however they can sit down with a Park Board member to discuss things moving forward.

Chief of Police Derek Morriss

Chief Morriss reported still waiting on additional quotes for new Dodge Durangos for the Police Department.

Lead Laborer Jarod Hudson

Hudson reported the Street Department has been staying busy keeping up with the snow. They're currently down to one salt spreader. The department was also curious if the board would consider the purchase of a box blade. Another entity has been using one on jobs around town and they believe it could cut the time spent on several city snow removal jobs substantially. Snow tracks for the Bobcat would also be an essential purchase in the near future.

Herron moved to approve the purchase of snow tracks for the Bobcat and a box blade attachment. Farmer seconded. All votes aye.

Alderman Kelley Herron

Herron wanted to thank everyone around town for their assistance and patience during snow removal.

Alderwoman Lisa Farmer

Farmer wanted to confirm Hudson was acting as interim Superintendent. Hudson confirmed that is what's stated within his job description.

Farmer then wanted to explain that she abstained from approving the utility consent agenda as she wanted to first address the misappropriation of funds reported from that office. She also was curious why the board was never notified.

Farmer questioned when the last audit was performed. Schulte inquired if Farmer was asking about a financial audit or the state audit she'd mentioned in recent days. Thomas expressed the importance of all audits and that all accusations should be investigated. It was then explained that city offices already obtain a financial audit yearly, which was why the distinction was being requested. Paris then explained that any audits requested, the city will have to pay for. Schoonover added that the claims should probably be researched prior to moving directly to obtaining an additional audit, especially considering who made the accusation. Thomas doesn't believe who made the accusation should matter.

Farmer wanted to know the protocol for closing city offices on days besides holidays and bad weather. Thomas noted it should not be closed without a vote from the board. Schulte asked what the date in question was. Farmer will check and get back with her.

Farmer relayed getting requests for the office to remove the window tinting from the door so people can see in, unless it's there for safety reasons.

Farmer wanted it noted that she received 3 complaints of a city snowplow making a trip to Clerk Schulte's residence on Friday the 12th, prior to city roads being fully clear. Schulte stated she made that request, as Alderwoman Farmer had set up a meeting that morning and messaged to inquire if Schulte was in the office yet that day. Schulte stated she didn't have a means to get to the office that morning during the snowstorm without assistance. Hudson stated he made the path out to Schulte's residence for her to safely get to work and again for her to get home, however he wanted it noted that the city roads were cleared first. If it was the clearing of alleys in question, those are the last concern during busy snow removal, as they typically contain parked cars. Additionally, the city has a policy in place allowing employees to utilize city equipment for personal use. Paris also wanted it to be noted that the city has a mutual aid agreement with the county for roads. Farmer stated she didn't have a problem with what took place, she just wanted the concerns relayed.

Schulte added that if the board wanted all accusations made regarding city staff to be discussed in open session, she compiled a list of occurrences all taking place since the meeting last week she could distribute for discussion. The misappropriation of funds, state audit request, and snow removal to her residence are included on that list. Thomas stated that during the snowstorm, no office staff were expected to report for work. Schulte informed Thomas that the board never relayed that to office staff.

Schoonover asked if the board was planning to address the remaining items on Schulte's list. Thomas stated the items were confusing and didn't particularly make sense. Farmer wanted to clarify that she was only inquiring from McGuire about the accusation, she was not accusing her of wrongdoing. Thomas relayed that McGuire explained herself well in the email she sent to the board and agreed that no one is accusing her of wrongdoing, it was a billing error. Staff replied that it was not a billing error, it was a work order error regarding the installation of the electric meter in question. It was also relayed that Superintendent Thomas was involved in every step of the finding and fixing of the error and the decision-making process for how to move forward, so staff were unsure why he made the accusation towards McGuire.

Mayor Thomas then stated that we make customers with water leaks pay for their usage, so this electric customer should have to pay the back amount that had never gotten billed. Paris stated those are two different scenarios; water leaks go through the meter and are owed whereas this electric meter's multiplier wasn't reported, thus never reported the lost usage. You shouldn't hold a customer responsible for a mistake made by the city over 10 years ago.

McGuire then asked to summarize the accusation. The mistake took place in 2011 and was discovered in 2022. It was not \$250,000.00 as claimed by Superintendent Thomas, the loss to the utility was in the range of \$7,000.00 over that time span. Once it was discovered that a multiple had never been reported for that meter, it was then recorded and corrected. Thomas spoke to the property owner regarding the mistake and to inform him to expect an increase in his bill moving forward. Then the department heads involved, Thomas and McGuire, made the joint decision along with staff input, to fix the issue and move forward. The loss broken down by month is what the auditors would term immaterial, so it was written off given it was a utility error. Thus, making the accusation being from an employee involved in the entire process so disappointing.

Paris stated the accusation is unfounded thus should have never left the closed executive session.

It was decided the remaining claim would be held for executive session, as it fell within the exception already on the agenda.

Adjourn into executive session for legal matters pursuant to Section 610.021 (3) RSMo.

Paris moved to adjourn into executive session pursuant to Section 610.021(3) RSMo. at 6:54 pm. Schoonover seconded. Farmer, Herron, Paris, and Schoonover voted aye.

Adjourn executive session and resume regular session.

Herron moved to adjourn into regular session at 7:53 pm. Paris seconded. All votes aye.

Other Business

Herron moved to accept Superintendent Thomas' letter of resignation. Schoonover seconded. All votes aye.

Farmer moved to approve the posting of the vacant Superintendent position. Paris seconded. All votes aye.

Paris stated wanting additional time to look into the proposed trash service rate increases.

Thomas noted the city needing a delegate for the water commission meeting next week.

McGuire relayed that staff is collecting ordinances and agreements that will also need changed.

Mutual aid for the electric department should be readdressed in the near future.

Herron moved to adjourn at 8:13 p.m. Schoonover seconded. All votes aye.