

CITY OF WILLARD
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
REGULAR MEETING
November 27, 2023
6:00 p.m.

Staff present: Interim City Administrator Donna Stewart, Project Engineer Steve Bodenhamer, Director of Finance Carolyn Halverson, Police Officer J.D. Landon, Public Works Director Justin Sorgen, Director of Parks and Rec Jason Knight, Finance Clerk Diana Huddle, and City Clerk Dona Slater

City Attorney Ken Reynolds was present.

Citizens in attendance: Amy Hill, Payton Hill, Megan Applegate, Angie Wilson, Steve Cobb, Debbie Ihrig, Larry Whitman, Mark Lancaster, and Brad Mowell.

Call to Order.

Mayor Baird called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call.

The City Clerk conducted the Roll Call.

Alderman Smith-present; Alderman Biellier-present; Alderman Lancaster-present; Alderman Swatosh-present; Mayor Baird-present. Aldermen Keene and Hall-not present.

Comments by Alderman Joyce Lancaster

Alderman Lancaster apologized to Ms. Halverson. She stated she had read a couple of numbers from previous audits incorrectly and misspoke on transfers from the Water/Sewer fund to the Parks fund. She said we need to be better stewards for citizens and provide transparency.

Agenda Amendments/Agenda Approval.

Ms. Stewart requested striking item number 11 and 15 from the agenda.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Biellier to approve the agenda after striking items 11 and 15.

Motion carried with a vote of 4-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Smith, Biellier, Lancaster, and Swatosh.

Consent Agenda.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Lancaster to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion carried with a vote of 4-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Biellier, Smith, Lancaster, and Swatosh.

Discussion/Vote on current Outstanding Invoices, Draft and Check Paid Invoices for October/November 2023.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Lancaster to approve the current outstanding invoices, and draft and check paid invoices for October 2023 and November 2023.

Motion carried with a vote of 4-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Smith, Biellier, Lancaster, and Swatosh.

Citizen Input.

Angie Wilson – 107 Ridgeview – is requesting the Board of Aldermen waive fees for her Sunshine Request. She has requested twelve (12) months of bank statements be sent to the State Auditor's office. She feels there may be fraud because of the embezzlement charges against former Alderman Corey Hendrickson.

Megan Applegate – 721 Colby St. – said she understands the Board of Aldermen decided to no longer fund an Economic Development department. She emailed her Aldermen but has not received responses. She would like to know how and when this decision came about. There are no minutes showing discussion or votes about this. She understands cutting costs, but it saddens her. She feels economic development is crucial to the community. She asked if the department will be brought back and what is the long-term plans. She asked the Board of Aldermen to vote yes to waive Sunshine Request fees.

Discussion/Vote to appoint Steven Cobb to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Ms. Stewart said she is trying to get members on the Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Cobb filled out a standard application and is present tonight.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Swatosh to appoint Steven Cobb to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Motion carried with a vote of 4-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Smith, Swatosh, Lancaster, and Biellier.

Discussion/Vote to waive Sunshine Request fees.

Ms. Stewart said this issue was also brought up during Citizen Input. A Sunshine Request to send twelve (12) months of bank statements to the State Auditor's office has been received. The citizen is requesting fees be waived. Ms. Stewart asked Mr. Reynolds what information will need to be redacted. He said he doesn't know. Ms. Halverson stated each page will have to have the bank account information redacted and this will take City staff more time. Mr. Reynolds said all the cities he represents do not waive the fees. Alderman Lancaster said it will set a precedent if we waive these fees. Most requests take very little research time for staff and fees are waived but when it will require more than an hour to research the fees are not waived.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith to deny the request to waive the Sunshine Request fees.

Motion carried with a vote of 4-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Lancaster, Swatosh, Biellier, and Smith.

Discussion on recording and posting of meetings.

Other cities record their meetings and post them on Facebook. It was asked if we have hardware installed that will record meetings. Alderman Smith sees no problem to live stream meetings. He said we could set up a YouTube channel. Ms. Stewart said we do not have any on-site tech or staff to handle this. Mayor Baird asked if there could be any liability to the City. Mr. Reynolds said no. Ms. Stewart said she will get back to the Board if this is feasible.

Discussion of Public Works department operations presented by Justin Sorgen, Public Works Director.

Mr. Sorgen said he was asked to get information for the Board of Aldermen, especially the new Aldermen. He gave a brief overview of the infrastructure of Willard and what Public Works does. Alderman Lancaster asked if the City needs a sewer treatment facility. Mr. Bodenhamer said it would be nice but is not needed now. He said the lift stations need to be upgraded first. It was decided to start the upgrades with the 94 Lift Station. Once the upgrades are complete it will be time to begin deliberations on the process of selecting a site for a treatment facility and discussions with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He said the process will begin around 2026.

The Board of Aldermen thanked Mr. Sorgen and his staff for their work on Thanksgiving Day to repair a water break. Mr. Sorgen said we report every break to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). They limit how many times you can have breaks. We have reached that limit. We can voluntarily mandate enforcement and work up a schedule to work with the DNR. Mr. Bodenhamer recommends a motion authorizing the administration to pursue voluntary enforcement.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Swatosh to give staff the discretion to enter into voluntary enforcement with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Motion carried with a vote of 4-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Lancaster, Biellier, Swatosh, and Smith.

Ordinance accepting the 2024 Park Fees for the City of Willard. (1st Read) Discussion/Vote.

Mr. Knight said some fees have been reduced. He presented a fee structure for next year.

The first read was conducted by the City Clerk.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Biellier to approve the Ordinance accepting the 2024 Park Fees for the City of Willard.

Motion carried with a vote of 4-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Biellier, Lancaster, Swatosh, and Smith.

Discussion of modifications to Chapter 230 Section 230.030, Collection of Solid Waste, of the City of Willard's Municipal Code.

Ms. Stewart gave a copy of Section 230 to the Aldermen. She said we need to modify the Ordinance pertaining to recycling. The recycling costs to service providers have gone up so much they can't afford to offer it. She said she will present a modified Ordinance removing solid waste collection. She needs a decision on recycling. Mr. Reynolds said the City can make vendors do what we want. Mayor Baird would like any timeframes to have trash out and picked up stricken. Other Aldermen agree.

Discussion of the proposed 2024 Budget.

Ms. Halverson handed out binders to the Board of Aldermen with budget documents going out ten (10) years. She would like to stop the four (4) percent deduction paid by employees for LAGERS retirement. Only three (3) cities in Greene County require employees to contribute. The consensus is to discontinue the employee contribution to LAGERS and to keep the two and one-half (2 ½) percent annual wage increase. It was discussed if monies are needed in the budget for a State Audit in 2024 and for headhunter agencies to hire a City Administrator.

Discussion/Vote on the date of the last Board of Aldermen meeting in December 2023.

Alderman Smith said he prefers December 28, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Biellier to hold the last Board of Aldermen meeting on December 28, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Motion carried with a vote of 3-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Biellier, Lancaster, and Smith. Voting no: Alderman Swatosh.

New Business.

None.

Unfinished Business.

Mr. Sorgen was asked about the Jackson Street Public Works building upgrade. He said it is in the works and the siding will be replaced soon.

Close Open Session.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Lancaster to Close the Open Session.

Motion carried with a vote of 4-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Swatosh, Lancaster, Billier, and Smith.

The Open Session was closed at 9:44 p.m.

Open Executive Session.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Biellier to Open the Executive Session.

Motion passed with a vote of 4-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Biellier, Lancaster, Smith, and Swatosh.

Mayor Baird called the Executive Session to order at 9:51 p.m.

Close the Executive Session.

Motion was made by Alderman Lancaster and seconded by Alderman Smith to Close the Executive Session.

Motion carried with a vote of 4-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Biellier, Lancaster, Smith, and Swatosh.

The Executive Session was closed at 10:20 p.m.

Adjourn Meeting.

Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Biellier to Adjourn the meeting. Motion carried with a vote of 4-0. Voting aye: Aldermen Lancaster, Swatosh, Biellier, and Smith.

The meeting Adjourned at 10:20 p.m.



Dona Slater, City Clerk



Sam Baird, Mayor