

City of Decatur
Board of Public Works & Safety Minutes
October 4, 2022

The City of Decatur Board of Public Works and Safety members met on October 4, 2022 at 6:00 at City Hall in Council Chambers, 172 N. Second Street, Decatur. Members present were Craig Coshow, Tyler Fullenkamp, and Mayor Dan Rickord. Also present were Clerk-Treasurer Phyllis Whitright and City Attorney Anne Razo.

The Clerk-Treasurer had emailed the minutes from the September 20, 2022 meeting. Fullenkamp made a motion to approve the minutes. Seconded by Coshow, the motion was adopted.

The first item on the agenda was regarding a portion of High Street which is currently under the jurisdiction of the County. Operations Manager, Jeremy Gilbert shared that several years ago when Mark Mitchel was the County Superintendent several areas were cleaned up when the City and the County shared parts of various streets. The High Street area from the second entrance to Homestead addition to US Highway 33, about half a mile has been repaved by the County Highway Department using Community Crossings Grant money. It was noted that the City has taken care of the area with plowing and salting for several years and it makes sense for the City to take over that area. Fullenkamp made a motion for the City Attorney to work with the County Attorney to move forward with the paperwork to take in the stretch of High Street currently owned by the County. Seconded by Coshow, the motion was adopted.

Operations Manager Jeremy Gilbert updated the Board Members regarding the use of a GPS System from Argos Government Solutions. Gilbert shared that the GPS System is in use for a trial period of 30 days. The System can be used to record the route paths for recycling and trash collections, alerts for maintenance on equipment and vehicles. The 30-day trial includes two (2) devices for two (2) vehicles. The cost after the trial period would be \$19.95 per month per vehicle, and will be paid from the Sanitation budget. There is no contract and is a month to month charge. Gilbert noted he feels the GPS System would be especially beneficial for take home vehicles. Gilbert shared that he simply wanted to make Board Members aware of the System and noted he would give an update at a later time when more information has been gathered. Coshow made a motion for Gilbert to continue the 30-day trial period on the GPS System from Argos Government Solutions and report back after the trial period ends. Seconded by Fullenkamp, the motion was adopted.

Next on the agenda was Operations Manager Jeremy Gilbert regarding an easement for the Bollman and 13th Street Improvements project. There is a need for a temporary right-of-way easement for construction contract with Russ Flueckiger at the first entrance into the Bixler Insurance location. The area is in need for improvements, especially sidewalks for safety of the residents. It was shared that talks had taken place earlier with Mr. Flueckiger and he was open to the City's need for the easement. Fullenkamp made a motion to proceed with the contract with the owner, Russ Flueckiger of Bixler Insurance, and authorized the Mayor to sign the contract. Seconded by Coshow, the motion was adopted.

Curt Witte, Building and Zoning Supt., and Brad Roe, Asst. Building Supt., appeared before the Board regarding Code Enforcement issues. The first location was at 804 Schirmeyer and it was noted that Kylie Harvey had attended the July 19, 2022 meeting and was given 30 days to clean up the yard. There had been little cleaned up, and then progress stopped and reverted back how it was, plus new items left in the yard. People from Common Ground Church had helped with cutting down the tall weeds around the shed. Ms. Harvey shared that she had borrowed a mower and she needs a truck to take things to the

landfill. She also plans to put things in her van to take to the landfill. Josh Zimmerman, Civil Infrastructure Manager, mentioned that the shed at the back of the lot was in the City's easement and had to be moved at least 20 feet in, or totally removed as work is planned for that area by the 17th of October, 2022. Witte suggested to Ms. Harvey the possibility of using NeighborLink to haul all the trash away and Ms. Harvey agreed with having their services. Ms. Harvey was given until October 17 to move the shed, and the items on the tarp, and was reminded she is responsible for the fees and trash removal. After Oct. 17th, Witte will check on the progress again. Ms. Harvey was encouraged to place the bikes and other items in the shed once it is moved to the proper location. City Attorney Anne Razo informed Ms. Harvey that if the shed isn't moved before the City works in the easement area, she is responsible for any costs or damages.

The second area discussed for Code Enforcement was 1043 Central Avenue, owned by Michael Mortorelli. A notice of abatement had been sent on August 8, 2022. Checking on August 20, 2022 it was found there was no change. The property has previously been condemned for at least two (2) years, and the fence on the property is falling down, shed deteriorating, overgrown grass and rotted windows on the house. Notification had been sent to the owner to attend this evening's meeting but was a no-show. It was noted that the ownership of the 1043 Central Avenue location keeps changing, and this is a new owner. Witte recommended that City Attorney Anne Razo send a letter to the owner a notice to abate for dilapidated structures and giving the owner 14 days to clean up the property with a fine of \$100 per day if it is not cleaned up in the 14 days. Fullenkamp made a motion approving Witte's recommendation and if things are not completed and at the end of 30 days the City would clean up the property and invoice the owner for the costs. Seconded by Coshow, the motion was adopted.

The third Code Enforcement issue was at 816 N. 13th Street, owned by Singh Bros. Oil, which was once a gas station, and has had two different owners since the original business. The first letter of abatement was sent on August 8, 2022. Included in the communications was an email from Mayor Rickord sent on August 22, 2022. With no action, the owner was notified to appear at this evening's meeting but did not show. The City employees have mowed the lawn at least three (3) times. Fullenkamp made a motion for the City Attorney to send a letter to the owner giving 14 days to clean up the dilapidated fence and shed with \$100 a day fine to be imposed if not cleaned up at the end of 14 days and notification if not removed in 30 days, the City will remove it and invoice the owner to cover the costs incurred. Seconded by Coshow, the motion was adopted.

Fire Chief Jeff Sheets appeared before the board seeking permission to begin the hiring process to fill the vacancy on the fire department before Assistant Chief Jim Hitchcock retires effective February 2, 2023. Fullenkamp made a motion to allow Chief Sheets to proceed with the hiring process. Seconded by Coshow, the motion was adopted.

Police Chief Lennie Corral appeared before the Board seeking permission regarding filling the position open as Officer Jagg Nunez is leaving the department on October 7, 2022 to take a private sector job. However, Officer Nunez wishes to remain as a Reserve Officer. Thus, discussion centered around any money Officer Nunez owes the City for the five-year contract agreement signed at the time of his employment and signing bonus. Chief Corral shared that he felt Officer Nunez should not be charged for the uniform and training as they will carry over for Officer Nunez as he continues as a Reserve Officer. It was noted that the contract signed for employment simply needs to be followed regarding the signing bonus. Fullenkamp made a motion to forgive the training and clothing cost for every year as long as Officer Nunez remains as a Reserve Officer with the continuation of the conditional employment contract, but the enforcement of the sign-on bonus will need to be repaid as per the contract. Seconded by Coshow, the motion was adopted.

Fullenkamp made a motion to make Officer Nunez's resignation letter a matter of record. Seconded by Coshow. Motion was carried.

Police Chief Lennie Corral sought permission to proceed with the hiring process to replace Officer Nunez. It was hoped there can possibly be a lateral hiring and Chief Corral would like to be able to advertise a \$5,000 signing bonus. Chief Corral would report back to the Board for approval at the time of any hiring. Chief Corral commented that getting police officers is quite a competitive position and it is likely a 3-month process. The cost of training an officer other than a lateral hire is about \$5,000. Fullenkamp made a motion to authorize Chief Corral to begin the process of hiring an officer and offer a sign-on bonus of up to \$5,000 based on training, experience, and certifications. Seconded by Coshow, the motion was adopted.

Police Chief Corral next shared that 2nd shift Sergeant Luke Rumschlag has requested to no longer be the 2nd shift Sergeant and move to days as of December 31, 2022, noting the sergeant position took a toll on his family. Chief Corral requested to open up the position for applications by early November and hopefully have the position filled by January 1, 2023. Fullenkamp made a motion to make Sergeant Luke Rumschlag's letter of resignation as 2nd shift Sergeant a matter of record. Seconded by Coshow, the motion was adopted.

Jamie Gephart, Community Coordinator appeared before the Board regarding fund raising for a Dog Park next to Kekionga Lake where the former Evergreen Assisted Living facility was located. The City has received approval from DNR. Gephart shared that it is hoped to raise \$20,000 and with Patronicity matching another \$20,000 for total of \$40,000 and also \$50,000 has been budgeted for a Dog Park. Costs would include lighting, fencing, stocking and cleaning the pond, and a pavilion. Fullenkamp made a motion to approve proceeding with the application process with Patronicity and recommend to Council to approve the funding for this project. Seconded by Coshow, the motion was adopted.

There being no other business to come before the Board, Fullenkamp made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Coshow, the motion was adopted.

Adjournment was at 7:20 P.M.