

RUSHVILLE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

1. ROLL CALL & CALL TO ORDER

The Rushville City Council met in the meeting room of the City Hall Building. Upon convening, Mayor Jeff Ervin directed City Clerk, Stacey Briney to call the roll. Upon ROLL CALL, the following answered present: Council Members: Susan Acker, Richard Davis, Terry Dodds, Bob Fishel, Bryan Matteson, Barry Rebman, and Mike Ryan. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. Council Member, Paul Trimble was absent.

Others present included: Stacey Briney, City Clerk; City Attorney, Erin Wilson-Laegeler; Eric Thurman, Chief of Police, Rick Wright; David Haney of *The Rushville Times*; Schuyler Isley, Economic Development Director; Lucas Moranville and Isaiah & Jacob Watkins, representing Boy Scout Troop 35.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The Opening Prayer was led by Mayor Jeff Ervin.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Ervin.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Economic Development Director, Schuyler Isley reported there is a private investor interested in putting in a small lodge in the Industrial Park that was originally earmarked for a motel. Isley stated the next step for the investor is to find out how many rooms Rushville would need, but this is different than a feasibility study and more like a current needs study. Isley said she will go to the TIF Committee to ask for Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000) to do the current needs study. Council Member, Mike Ryan asked the name of the investor, and Isley stressed that she cannot say the name but made sure everyone knew they were local, know the community, and have a passion for this. Economic Development Committee Member, Richard Davis wondered if the investor has anything else like this, and Isley stated this would be their first one.

Isley said once the funds are approved by the TIF Committee, there would be a long process as far as funding, etc. Isley noted they are looking for a stay pattern as far as hotel/motel tax goes. Isley stated she will be applying for the TIF funds on behalf of the Schuyler County Economic Development Commission which will be different than most TIF applications. A discussion followed.

Isley, representing the Schuyler County Architectural Foundation reported they are celebrating five (5) years this year and they are very proud of that. Isley thanked the council for making the historic places a priority. Isley noted one of the historic places that was included in the book by Mr. Badar is the property on East LaFayette Street that the city is looking to take over but only because of when the house was constructed and not that anyone famous slept there.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

All items on the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine in nature and will be enacted in one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council Member so requests, in which event, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered as the first item after approval of the Consent Agenda.

- a) Approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held January 16, 2024
- b) Approve the Minutes of the Grievance & Personnel Committee Meeting held January 17, 2024; Historic Preservation Committee Meeting held January 17, 2024
- c) Approve "Claims for Council Approval Dated 02/05/24" & Accept Monthly Reports
- d) Approve Request for Loan Reimbursement

Dodds MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. Fishel SECONDED, AND THE MOTION CARRIED WITH AN ALL "YEA" ROLL CALL VOTE AS FOLLOWS: 7 YEAS – Acker, Davis, Dodds, Fishel, Matteson, Rebman, & Ryan; 0 NAYS; 1 ABSENT – Trimble.

6. ITEMS TO BE REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA – IF APPLICABLE

All items were approved on the Consent Agenda.

7. DISCUSS & CONSIDER APPROVING TO ADVERTISE FOR FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE IN CITY HALL

Grievance & Personnel Committee Chairman, Barry Rebman reported the committee met on January 17th to discuss hiring another full-time employee in City Hall. Rebman said the city tried to find part-time help but it was hard to get because people need the insurance, etc.

Fishel MOVED TO APPROVE ADVERTISING FOR FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE IN CITY HALL. Matteson SECONDED, AND THE MOTION CARRIED WITH AN ALL “YEA” ROLL CALL VOTE AS FOLLOWS: 7 YEAS – Davis, Dodds, Fishel, Matteson, Rebman, Ryan, & Acker; 0 NAYS; 1 ABSENT – Trimble.

8. DISCUSS & CONSIDER APPROVING RED GRANT FOR PINECONE PRIMITIVES

Economic Development Committee Chair, Susan Acker reported the committee met prior to the council meeting to review a RED Grant application from Pinecone Primitives. Acker stated they are looking at getting new windows and a new roof.

Acker MOVED TO APPROVE A RED GRANT APPLICATION IN THE AMOUNT OF FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$5,000) TO PINECONE PRIMITIVES. Dodds SECONDED, AND THE MOTION CARRIED WITH AN ALL “YEA” ROLL CALL VOTE AS FOLLOWS: 7 YEAS – Dodds, Fishel, Matteson, Rebman, Ryan, Acker, & Davis; 0 NAYS; 1 ABSENT – Trimble.

9. DISCUSS & CONSIDER APPROVING REQUEST FOR VARIANCE ON ANIMAL CONTROL ORD. 1367, SECTION 14-2.11

Animal Control Committee Chairman, Rebman reported everyone had a copy of a request from Shaunice Hiland asking to allow his five (5) dogs. Rebman said all of the dogs are up-to-date on their shots and are all properly tagged. Mayor Ervin stated Animal Control Officer, Dave Edwards informed him that all the dogs are registered with all their current shots. Rebman said he did not have a problem approving this request.

Rebman MOVED TO APPROVE A REQUEST FOR AN ANIMAL CONTROL VARIANCE ON SECTION 14-2.11 FROM SHAUNICE HILAND AT 303 E LITTLE STREET, LOT 3. Fishel SECONDED, AND THE MOTION CARRIED WITH AN ALL “YEA” ROLL CALL VOTE AS FOLLOWS: 7 YEAS – Fishel, Matteson, Rebman, Ryan, Acker, Davis, & Dodds; 0 NAYS; 1 ABSENT – Trimble.

10. COUNCIL MEMBER & OFFICIAL’S REPORTS

Cemetery Committee Chairman, Bryan Matteson reported Cemetery Sexton, George Vincent wanted to remind the council that blankets and flowers have to be removed by February 28th.

Matteson stated he had received a complaint regarding dumpsters and burning on a property on South Liberty Street that maybe the city could address. Mayor Ervin noted he will address this with Chief of Police, Rick Wright.

Council Member, Terry Dodds reported the Boy Scouts were in attendance tonight because they are trying to get their community merit badges.

Historic Preservation Committee Chairman, Richard Davis reported he was contacted by Anthony Miller from Hutchison Engineering regarding information on the historic district. Davis said Miller told him that the city was close on the last grant application but we did not have a historic district set up. Davis noted he will probably call a meeting to get whatever information is needed.

Council Member, Mike Ryan reported his neighbor’s dog had an incident with another animal this week and she has been very concerned about it. Mayor Ervin stated Edwards will give his report to the Animal Control committee and then they will meet and decide what to do about the situation.

Council Member, Bob Fishel reported he has heard several compliments on how the bad spot on North Liberty Street has been fixed. Fishel said people are very happy.

Fishel stated he has been contacted about the parking spaces across the street from the Lipsticked Pig wondering if they are public parking spots. Fishel noted there has been a couple cars parked long-ways from the old coffee house north to in front of the welding shop.

City Clerk, Stacey Briney reported she had been looking into the fees the city gets charged for accepting debit and credit cards. Clerk Briney stated she figured the cost to the city was approximately

Sixteen Thousand Dollars (\$16,000) per year. Clerk Briney said at one time, the city charged for a person to use their card, but there were a lot of times that the fee was missed, so they just quit charging. Clerk Briney stated about every place charges to use the cards and she completely understands. Clerk Briney thinks this really needs to be looked into.

City Attorney, Erin Wilson-Laegeler reported States Attorney, Chuck Laegeler indicated that the SS4A grant for the Escapa Trail was denied. Attorney Wilson-Laegeler stated she does not have any updates as to if the group is wanting to try next year or look into a planning grant.

Attorney Wilson-Laegeler also reported that the judge deemed the Gordley property on East LaFayette Street abandoned and gave them thirty (30) days to challenge it. Attorney Wilson-Laegeler noted she will go back to court on March 13th for the final ruling and if there is no challenge, the city should start getting bids for demolition of the house because it is considered dangerous. Attorney Wilson-Laegeler said she has been speaking to Alex Ring, whom bought the taxes for the past three (3) years and he does not want to pay for demolition so he will get refunded from the county.

Acker stated she knows there is a person interested in purchasing the property, and Mayor Ervin noted that was correct but he feels the need to put a timeline on something like that so it just does not stay like it is and has been for years. Ryan said so he understands that the property has been condemned, and Attorney Wilson-Laegeler stressed that the judge deemed the property abandoned and unsafe. Chief Wright stated the amount of money to do any type of work to the house would be a lot and it is not safe to even be in. A discussion followed regarding valuable items that might be inside the house.

Dodds stated he does not think the city would even want anyone inside the house for liability reasons, and Mayor Ervin stressed that if the city owns it, no one should be inside of it. Attorney Wilson-Laegeler recommended advertising for bids for demolition of the house. **Consensus of the council, except Ryan, was to move forward with advertising for demolition.** Ryan again stated that he feels someone that knows stuff about antiques should look into items inside, and Mayor Ervin said his problem is how long will the house continue to sit until someone does this. Dodds noted this is becoming a health issue.

Mayor Jeff Ervin reported everyone had the appropriations in their packets for the next fiscal year. Mayor Ervin urged the committee chairs to meet with their department heads and get their numbers in so the council can pass the ordinance as soon as possible.

Mayor Ervin commended the city crew on the removal of the snow and ice. Mayor Ervin said the crew did a wonderful job.

11. ADJOURN

Acker MOVED TO ADJOURN. Rebman SECONDED, AND THE MOTION CARRIED WITH AN ALL “YEA” ROLL CALL VOTE AS FOLLOWS: 7 YEAS – Matteson, Rebman, Ryan, Acker, Davis, Dodds, & Fishel; 0 NAYS; 1 ABSENT – Trimble. THE MEETING STOOD ADJOURNED ACCORDINGLY AT 7:36 P.M.

Minutes submitted by,

Stacey L. Briney, City Clerk/CMC

Date Minutes Approved