

OGLESBY CITY COUNCIL
JUNE 28, 2023 WORKING MEETING

A special meeting of the Oglesby City Council was held on Wednesday June 28, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Mayor Jason Curran.

PRESENT: Mayor Jason Curran, Commissioners Richard Baldrige, Terry Eutis, Gregory McDermott, Tony Stefanelli, City Clerk Becky Clinard and Attorney Pat Barry.

There was no public comment on agenda items.

Mayor Curran explained that this meeting was a “working meeting” which allows for more detailed discussion on matters before the council. He said that public comment would be allowed during the meeting, provided that the comments were kept to a minimum and on topic.

Curran updated the council on a new domain and emails for the city. The city is seeking a .gov domain (oglesbyil.gov). This process has been initiated and will take up to 20 days after the application is filed to be granted. Once the domain is secured, new emails thorough Network Solutions and the city’s website will be moved to this domain. The clerk told the council that Connecting Point will host the domain (\$10 year and \$20 setup fee) and provide support at their normal hourly rate if required. Curran told the council that the emails will cost the city a little more than a dollar a month.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY Stefanelli, SECONDED BY Eutis to table discussion and/or approval of the bids for the bucket truck. Questions remain about the legality of a commissioner being able to bid on city property. **AYES:** Baldrige, Eutis, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **NAYS:** None **MOTION CARRIED.**

Commissioner Eutis then offered a formal apology to Carus Chemical Company. At the council meeting on June 19th, Eutis told the council that the insurance company for Carus had offered only 85% of the cost to replace equipment destroyed in the fire. Eutis did not learn until after the meeting that the insurance carrier had called and left a message on Friday that they would be reimbursing the city 100%. Commissioner Stefanelli apologized to Eutis for his department’s oversight.

Eutis then asked the council to consider adopting a city-wide maternity leave policy. Eutis said that it was unlikely the item would be addressed in contract negotiations because of a male-dominated workforce. He proposed consideration of a “light-duty” option and paid time off. Eutis noted that some departments, like the street department, would not have a “light duty” option due to the nature of the work they perform.

Eutis named a long list of employers who offer paid maternity leave and cautioned that other local police departments are offering it as well. Eutis’ fear is that his department could lose officers because the city doesn’t offer that benefit. He also said that the city does offer Family Medical Leave Act, which allows for 12 weeks of time off for the care of family member, new infant or bonding time for adopted children – but noted that that time is unpaid, unless the employee uses their accrued vacation, comp and sick time.

Curran said he strongly supported the idea of light duty, but was concerned about offering a paid benefit to only one class of employee (women). He feared it would “open a can of worms.” Curran said he prefers that the issue be part of the bargaining contract, but Eutis said he thought it should be city policy,

so that it covered all employees – not just those covered by a union contract. Stefanelli and Baldrige agreed, with Baldrige expressing his desire to “move on it pretty quickly” and Stefanelli saying that “it was the right thing to do.” Eutis hopes to have something for the board to consider at the July 5, 2023 meeting.

Stefanelli then asked that item # 14 be moved up for discussion so that the bar owners in attendance did not have to sit through long discussions on other topics. Curran consulted Roberts Rule of Order telling Stefanelli that he would need a motion for a “point of” to do that.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY Stefanelli, SECONDED BY Eutis to move item #14 to be addressed next. **AYES:** Baldrige, Eutis, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **NAYS:** None **MOTION CARRIED.**

Curran then read a letter signed by seven Oglesby bar owners asking for expanded hours (11 pm instead of 10 pm) during the weekends in May-October and a change to the established method of measuring noise from the approximate location of the property boundary to the complainant’s location at the time the complaint was made. Curran said he was in support of offering expanded hours, noting that the city has received some complaints in the past and found the bar owners willing to address the concerns.

Eutis said that he and Chief Mike Margis had done some research and had found very few complaints in the last four years. Margis also praised the bar owners, saying that it “was always taken care of We work well together.” Eutis and Stefanelli both said that they had run on a pro-business platform and were ready to approve the changes. Curran stressed his reluctance to push through the matter without giving residents a chance to weigh in, noting that the issue was being discussed in a working meeting, noting that working meetings aren’t typically used to take action on matters unless an emergency. “In my opinion, I don’t believe this is an emergent issue,” Curran said.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY Eutis, SECONDED BY Stefanelli “to put this as our No.1 priority for Pat Barry to have ready at our next meeting.” Curran called for a point of information, saying that he felt more discussion was needed before a vote. Attorney Barry concurred, saying that he needed more information to prepare the ordinance. Curran pointed out that the council hadn’t discussed the specific changes the bar owners had requested – information that Barry would need to prepare the ordinance. Both Eutis and Stefanelli continued to push for a vote, noting that the motion was only that Barry was instructed to make it a priority to have the ordinance ready for the next meeting. Curran called for a vote: **AYES:** Baldrige, Eutis, McDermott, Stefanelli **NAYS:** None **ABSTAIN:** Curran **MOTION CARRIED.**

A lengthy discussion then followed on the changes requested, it was agreed that Barry would draft an ordinance that would allow music until 11 p.m.; would apply all year, not just May through October; and not to change the way the sound is measured.

The council then addressed Ordinance No. 1168-062121, which granted a stipend to three named event coordinators for the work they did planning and executing events. Two of the named coordinators are either no longer employed by the city or had resigned from the position. Curran said the remaining employee, Erin Quick, had done “a fantastic job” after taking over the responsibility for Summer Fun Fest, but felt that a change was needed. Curran noted that the effort involves all of the city’s departments – “a lot of moving parts.” Curran suggested that the city recognize departmental roles and

responsibilities. He also said he didn't have a problem with "assigning a specific event coordinator for each event we have during the year." Curran then opened the floor for discussion.

Rich Baldrige said he felt that the current ordinance didn't work out as intended, and felt it "screwed the taxpayers." Curran agreed to a point, noting that his expectation was that the stipend would ensure that events would be manned, but noted that more than once those employees scheduled vacation during an event, leaving others to take on additional responsibility. Baldrige said he felt the responsibilities should be shared amongst departments. "Get rid of it," Baldrige said.

Stefanelli then presented the council with a flow chart, which was met with some resistance. Stefanelli's chart broke down areas of responsibility for each commissioner/department.

The Mayor and commissioners took exception to the Finance Dept. being responsible for "overall event planning." Stefanelli asked the council if they had suggestions for improvement. Baldrige felt that the flow chart may be perceived as giving one person control over events. Curran said that he felt the council is responsible for the "overall event planning." Curran said he feels once the event starts, the Mayor is in charge. Baldrige then suggested that the council hold off on this discussion until they discuss the event coordinator position.

Curran then reiterated his support for an assistant Event coordinator, saying that he felt that Summer Fun Fest is "such a big deal for a city of our size," that it can overwhelm the city's clerk's office at times. Curran said he wanted a part-timer that could do some of the things the clerk's office does now – like sending out sponsor letters, prep work, etc. – "putting time and resources back into the clerk's office."

Eutis asked Curran how many hours this person would work, noting that the ordinance has the potential of paying \$20,000 for this person. Eutis noted that the city's now pays \$6,000, and even with overtime, the total is "not close to \$20,000." He also questioned who the person would report to. Eutis pointed out that the city clerk has experience (in event planning) and doesn't get overtime. Mayor Curran corrected him, noting that the clerk does get overtime after 84 hours in a two-week period. Eutis said that even with overtime, we have someone "responsible and capable in the seat, so it makes sense." Stefanelli said that he felt the same, saying that he felt the clerk had proved herself during Summer Fun Fest and he would advocate for her, not only because she was in his department, but because she was capable.

Curran then proposed that another way to accomplish the same goal might be to shift the focus to a person who would serve as a support person to the council. This person could also assist with events. Eutis questioned whether the person could be a permanent parttime position. He questioned Barry at what point a person becomes eligible for benefits like health insurance. Barry responded that he thought it was at 1000 hours a year, but that it is determined by the council. Stefanelli said that he felt starting off with a parttime person was a good idea, and if the position/person worked out, the council could consider a position with benefits at some point. Curran suggested 3 days a week, 4 hours a day, noting that that left room to add additional hours if necessary for work to assist with events. Baldrige expressed his concern about finding someone who would be interested in a parttime position – but the others felt that that wasn't a concern, suggesting that a parent with kids in school or a retired person might find the job attractive. Curran will have a job description ready for a future council meeting.

The talk then turned to a formal event committee. Curran said that he felt the previous conversations indicated a concern that the event committee would “impede upon” We Are Oglesby group. Curran had prepared a more detailed proposal. He even included a sample agenda for the committee. Curran feels that the committee could assist in volunteer coordination, noting that “times have changed and a lot less people want to volunteer.” Curran said he felt that finding the right people to serve on the committee – across a wide demographics –

Stefanelli suggested that a semi-annual meeting where residents could provide input or sending out a survey might be a better approach. Stefanelli expressed his concerns that putting together a committee would result in “same old, same old” where people don’t show and the conversation boils down to just two or three people.” Curran said he was all for a survey, but noted that it was much more work than what you expect it to be. Stefanelli assured him that he thought his department could handle it.

Talk then turned to the flow chart, with Baldrige expressing his concern that anyone looking at the chart as presented would assume that the Commissioner of Finance is in charge of overall event planning. Stefanelli asked if the council agreed that the clerk should serve as the point person. Baldrige worried that if the current clerk were to leave, the next person coming in would assume they have control over the events. Eutis suggested that the flow chart show that all commissioners are empowered the same, suggesting that the top line showing the commissioners be connected. Stefanelli agreed to remove “overall event planning” from the areas of oversight from the Finance Commissioner.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY Eutis, **SECONDED BY** Stefanelli to rescind Ordinance No. 1168-0621, which named three city employees as event coordinators and compensated them for their role. **AYES:** Baldrige, Eutis, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **NAYS:** None **MOTION CARRIED.**

The council then took up the matter of the council chambers. Curran told the council he reached out to “numerous” engineers and architects he’d met at IML Conference last year and “none of them” responded. He has also looked at a company that sells ready-to-assemble furniture, but noted that the city would have to put it all together. He said he then reached out to Kmetz Architects, the firm that did the IVRD building. They were able to produce a full set of detailed plans (from the year 2000). Curran and Baldrige sat down with the architect and discussed their vision for an improved council chambers. Curran noted that the architect came back with an estimate of \$19,000 just for their service and \$120,000 for the project. Curran said he felt that was “excessive.”

Curran said that he realized that the upgrade was going to have to be done in stages, noting that Commissioner Stefanelli had already begun the process with his proposal to put a large screen tv in the chambers for presentations, etc. Curran said that he was for that, if the TV could be moved downstairs in the future to make way for other improvements. Curran presented his options for moving forward:

- Buy the basic furniture and put it together ourselves
- Reach out to other architects for more quotes
- Reach out to a local builder.
- Make contacts at this year’s IML conference

Curran said that reaching out to a local builder would also meet another need – expanding the clerk’s office to allow for a larger area to hold meetings and meet privately with employees, vendors, officials, etc.

Stefanelli told the council of his plans to move the council “out of the stone age” by adding a large screen tv that will be used for presentations during meetings and a slideshow of photos during the day promoting Oglesby and city events. Eutis estimated the project to be around \$1,500.

McDermott said he was for anything that was “functional and professional” but thought that the city had other projects more pressing and was not on board to go for “the wow” factor.

Curran said he felt it important to upgrade the council chambers, noting that he worried about the impression the current chambers left those who might be looking to bring their business or service to the community. Stefanelli agreed, noting that it was time for an update and that he felt it would foster “civic pride and public perception.” He added, jokingly, that all he wanted right now was the TV.

Curran talked about putting a table skirt on the front of the council desks, noting that it was a cheap remedy in the interim. Eutis said it was like “putting lipstick on a pig.”

Eutis then asked Nick Carrico if he knew anyone (an interior designer) they could contact. Carrico said he would provide names.

Greg Stein, said he’d been “asking for that television for years.” Stein doesn’t agree with the location of the tv and asked that the council like consider putting the council camera on a track to include a view of the clerk. He also mentioned the blue trash can outside of the window behind the council seating. He was assured that the window issue was already being discussed.

Curran asked the council to consider splitting the cost of a sewer backup valve with residents. The council agreed – due to the length of the meeting – that that was an issue best discussed at a later date.

Curran then sought input on the revised Communication and Hazards Plan – going over his changes addressing Code Red, and creating a “drop down list of businesses” that should be contacted before a planned outage. He also talked about his plan to do a voice siren test on July 4th. Eutis just asked that the plan make it clear that his offices would not be involved in the audible siren, as his offices would be busy handling the incident.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY Eutis, SECONDED BY McDermott to accept the changes to the Emergency Communication and Hazards Plan V1.2 **AYES:** Baldrige, Eutis, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **NAYS:** None **MOTION CARRIED.**

Eutis talked about a central supply for things that every department uses on a daily basis, like cleaning supplies, bottled water, etc. Eutis said it makes more sense to buy in bulk and have it stored on city property rather than having employees “running all over” to get supplies. He asked if he had council support to seek out options. He will bring a couple options to the council at a future meeting.

McDermott talked about the parking lot on Walnut St., his concern about people parking on city streets – particularly at corners, and the need for sidewalks. He called on the council to enforce the rules that are already on the books. Eutis suggested that he talk with city engineer Jim Clinard on what codes exist as far as setbacks. Curran said the code calls for 15 feet, but noted that although they have started painting the corners, the corner in question was not painted. McDermott said his crew ran out of paint, but would be getting more and finishing the project. Stefanelli assured McDermott that the sidewalk issue was being addressed. Curran said that some of the missing sidewalks will be addressed with the Safe Route to Schools.

McDermott asked the council's opinion on whether the city should buy or rent equipment. Eutis asked McDermott for more specifics, including an analysis of what the city has spent in the past and what the rental fees are. McDermott said he would work with the clerk's office to get that information.

Curran went over his changes to the city's personnel policy. He added verbiage to address employees reporting personal property damage, how paid time off is to be used, and how to reprimand employees. Eutis asked that a maternity leave policy be added.

Baldrige then asked the council to approve the use of public real property to use for a dog run and the estimate for the fence. Baldrige told the council that he was working on the signage for the area. Curran asked if the city needed to do anything to set aside the land for the dog run. Barry told the council that they just needed to make a motion and agree to use the land for a dog run. They will do that at the next meeting. Stefanelli asked if the council could make the motion at this meeting, or if it needed to wait until the next meeting. Eutis asked if Baldrige had considered adding a second entrance to address the mud that other dog parks experience. Baldrige said he didn't think it would be a problem and his priority would be getting the fence up – if it becomes a problem, a second fence can be added later.

Curran presented the recommendations from the facade committee meeting. The amended grant program added a second classification to address vacant buildings and added some stipulations for payment tied to a new business occupying the renovated structure. Eutis said he believed in investing in the downtown district and was all for it.

Greg Stein shared his thoughts with the council on the program.

Curran then updated the council on his abatement incentives for large industry customers. Curran said he is having difficulty putting together a program because of the complexity. He said he is still working on it.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Greg told the council that people prefer the LaSalle pool

COMMISSIONER UPDATES

There were none.

MAYOR UPDATE:

Curran briefly discussed the Code Red updates, talking about a drop-down menu for people who need to be notified of an outage immediately and his plans to do an audible siren test on July 4th.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY Eutis, SECONDED BY McDermott to adjourn at 8:21 p.m. 2 **AYES:** Baldrige, Eutis, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **NAYS:** None **MEETING ADJOURNED**