

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 5, 2013 CITY COMMISSION MEETING

The regular meeting of the City Commission of the City of Holton met at 7:00 P.M. in City Hall on Monday evening, August 5, 2013. Commissioners Tim Morris, Hal Cochren, Erich Campbell, Dan Brenner and Mayor Robert Dieckmann were present.

The Public Hearing for the FY2014 budget was opened by Mayor Robert Dieckmann. No public comments were made. The hearing was closed.

Mayor Robert Dieckmann opened the regular meeting.

Minutes of the June 15, 2013 meeting were approved as written.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Don Fate, a resident of Oak Ridge subdivision located outside the city limits, appeared before the commission requesting the city put fire hydrants in the subdivision. He advised there are 18 lots currently with 17 of those with expensive homes on them and they would like to have fire hydrants along their road. They would possibly be willing to pay for or assist with the cost of these hydrants. Commission Erich Campbell asked Fate if the residents of the subdivision would be willing to be annexed so they could receive city services. Fate said he couldn't speak for everyone but he didn't think they would be for higher taxes. He said he could bring it up at their spring meeting. The commissioners said they would be willing to look into it.

APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE: Claims against the City of Holton between July 16, 2013 and August 5, 2013, were presented to the Commission for their approval. After careful consideration, said claims were approved and given the title Appropriation Ordinance #2090. Hal Cochren moved and Tim Morris seconded the motion for their approval. Vote thereon: all, yes.

FISCAL YEAR 2014 PROPOSED BUDGET: Commissioners were presented with the proposed FY2014 budget for their approval. Erich Campbell asked what we were planning to use Capital Improvement for as he would like to see us do the water tower project or some sewer line projects. He was informed that that fund was currently being reserved for the remaining catalyst converters for the lights plant as we are on a deadline to have those changed with the EPA. Even though there is not a mill levy increase in this budget, commissioners were required to pass Ordinance 13-004 attesting to a tax increase. The redistribution of debt service allocation was the reason for the ordinance. Tim Morris moved to approve Ordinance 13-004. Hal Cochren seconded the motion. Vote thereon: all; yes. Dan Brenner made a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2014 budget. Hal Cochren seconded the motion. Vote thereon: all; yes.

NUISANCE ISSUES: Erich Campbell explained to the commission that he had been getting several citizen complaints about sub-standard housing that indicated to him we have a problem in our city. He suggested working on issuing a renter's license to landlords for their properties which would require a yearly inspection or whenever tenants move out. If problems are detected in the inspection, the landlord can be given a timetable to repair them if occupied or repairs must be completed before new tenants can take possession. He commented that we have been overly kind in the past and that is not working. We need to take a tougher stance. Bret Bauer, City Manager, offered up the option of adopting the International Property Management Code, but he said that there are provisions in that code we may not be able to enforce. Erich suggested we build our own set of codes. Tim Morris brought up the point that not all sub-standard properties are rentals. There are plenty of owner occupied properties. He feels that no one should have their property devalued by a neighbor. Bauer also presented commissioners with a copy of our current ordinance dealing with dangerous structures and dealing with blight on a neighborhood.

Campbell said he still feels we need a multi-pronged attack on this problem in order to get it under control. He challenged the other commissioners, if they did not like his idea, to come back with another option. Dan Brenner agreed we need to do something but felt we really need to have our city attorney look at the legal aspects of doing this. Bob Dieckmann agreed we have a problem and felt they commissioners needed to take the ideas they heard home and digest them. Tony Raaf, local landlord, asked the commissioners what legal recourse does the city have if you have been there and they still don't fix it. Kerwin McKee, Assistant City Manager/Code Enforcement Officer, explained that if it is a dangerous structure it is presented to the commission and they decide if the is to be fixed or demolished. Smaller nuisances are written up and if not fixed owners are sent a citation to appear in court. Raaf asked the commission not to punish everyone because you have a handful or bad landlords. Scott Bartlett, local landlord, asked what they city feels can be built on these older lots when the homes are demolished. The lots are too small by current code to build a house on them, so what happens then? John Chiles, another local landlord told the commission what we really need is industry back in this community to help with the tax base. With industry come employed persons to buy homes and fix them up. Campbell told the group of landlords he was not married to the idea of rental licenses. Morris suggested the topic be put back on the next agenda for discussion. All of the commissioners agreed to revisit the idea at the next meeting.

In other business:

Bret Bauer reported to the commission that the Pennsylvania Avenue brick project was 99% complete. The road is open and the street department only has some dressing up of the areas behind the curb to complete. Bauer also informed the commission that the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) had approved our request to crosswalk signs at Linscott Park and compression engine braking signs at the city limits. The street department has already installed all the signs.

The commission was reminded that there will be a joint meeting with the Jackson County Commission at 2:00 p.m. on August 19, 2013, at the Jackson County Courthouse. There will also be a strategic planning meeting on August 19, 2013 at Holton City Hall.

Bob Dieckmann had a conversation with the driver for the Pomona Lake Ski Club. He told Bob they only need 2-3 foot of water to ski. Bob also informed the city manager that the group will require a handicapped accessible portable bathroom for the event.

Erich Campbell asked about whether solicitors need a permit to go door to door. He was told that a permit was only required if a solicitor is going door to door in residential areas. A permit is not required to solicit a business.

Meeting was adjourned.

Teresa Riley
City Clerk