Murphysboro City Council Meeting

February 11, 2020

The Murphysboro, Illinois, City Council met in regular session, pursuant to its ordinances, on the 11th day of February, 2020. Mayor Stephens called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and invited Alderman Hughes to lead the council in prayer. Following the invocation, Mayor Stephens led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Mayor Stephens then directed City Clerk Hunziker to call the roll. The roll was called with the following:

**Present:** Barb Hughes,Jance Curry-Witzman,Russell Brown, William Pierson, Gary McComb, John Erbes, Mike Bastien, Gloria Campos, W.J. Pittman

**Absent:** Dan Bratton

The council then reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting.

Motion: To approve the minutes of the January 28, 2020, council meeting. All aldermen received a copy of the minutes, for their review, prior to the meeting.

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| Motion by Alderman McComb | Second by Alderman Brown |

Mayor Stephens called for a voice vote. All were in favor. **Motion Carried**

Alderman Hughes inquired as to:

#850 page 13 Tri-State? 7th Street right of Way

#850 page 6 Johnstone – blower? Heater in Fire Station #2

Alderman Campos inquired as to:

#850 page 10 ? Grease remover

page 11 Schwebel Printing? new Dispatcher clothing

**Motion: To approve the accounts payable, register #850 & 851 through February 11, 2020, accounts receivable through January 31, 2020, and payroll through January, 2020. All aldermen received a copy of the accounts payable for their review, prior to the meeting.**

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| Motion by Alderman McComb | Second by Alderman Hughes |

Mayor Stephens called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

**Motion Carried**

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## COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS

**Alderman Pittman opened discussion for Budget & Finance related items**.

Old Business: Nothing at this time.

New Business: Nothing at this time.

No public comment.

**Alderman McComb opened discussion for Building & Grounds related items.**

Old Business:

Consideration of Replacement of the Front Doors at the MYRC: Alderman McComb stated no one is present from the Murphysboro Youth and Rec Center. Mayor Stephens stated Joe Fry has a bid coming in and may have another one soon. Asked to be tabled until next meeting.

Consideration of Replacement of the Fire Department HVAC system: Alderman McComb stated Voss Heating has the lowest bid at $7936.00. Chief McBride explained what all would be done. Alderman Campos asked if that included the removal of the old ductwork? Yes.

Motion: To approve the bid from Voss Heating for $7936.00 for the replacement of the Fire Department’s HVAC system.

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| Motion by Alderman Bastien | Second by Alderman Pierson |

Mayor Stephens called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

**Motion Carried**

New Business:

Consideration of Bidding the Heating & Cooling Maintenance Contract: Alderman McComb stated have Voss locked in at $35 service call. Alderman Hughes asked when the contract expires? December 31, 2019. Will they keep the service call at $35 for the new contract? Mayor Stephens stated they always say they will perform spring and fall maintenance and are always late on it. Alderman McComb stated can specify regarding that. Mayor Stephens stated if they will keep the $35 service charge and do better with the six-month maintenance.

Motion: To approve Voss Heating for the City Heating & Cooling Maintenance Contract if they will continue the $35 service charge and be more timely on the spring and fall maintenance.

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| Motion by Alderman Hughes | Second by Alderman Pittman |

Mayor Stephens called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

**Motion Carried**

No public comment.

**Alderman Erbes opened discussion for Community Relations Committee related items.**

Old Business: Nothing at this time.

New Business:

Consideration of Street Closures & Assistance Request for St. Patrick’s Day Festivities:

Motion: To approve Street Closures & Assistance Request for St. Patrick Day Festivities.

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| Motion by Alderman Campos | Second by Alderman McComb |

Mayor Stephens called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

**Motion Carried**

Consideration of Street Closures for Brews Brothers Taproom:

Motion: To approve Street Closures Requested by Brews Brother Taproom.

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| Motion by Alderman Bastien | Second by Alderman Pittman |

Mayor Stephens called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

**Motion Carried**

Consideration of Street Closures for the Oak Street Art Fair:

Motion: To approve Street Closures Requested for the Oak Street Art Fair.

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| Motion by Alderman Hughes | Second by Alderman McComb |

Mayor Stephens called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

**Motion Carried**

No public comment.

**Alderman Bastien opened discussion for Public Improvement related items.**

Old business:

Update on the code violations at 811 North 14th Street: Alderman Bastien stated demolition permit given to property owner, will do in February.

New business:

Discussion regarding Business Proposal: Alderman Bastien stated Carl Martin sent an email regarding his business proposal on January 10. He is in Chicago but Craig Heiser is present, would like to table until Mr. Martin can be present. Mr. Heiser stated he does not have anything prepared to present. Mayor Stephens stated Mr. Martin is proposing a pool hall/video gaming/youth hall, is opposed to any more gaming licenses, told him to contact the council. Alderman Pittman stated you can’t do gaming and youth, right? Correct. Alderman Bastien stated he wanted it presented to the council. Alderman McComb asked if he can be here at the next meeting? Mr. Heiser stated he sees the shopping center as a good source of business for that area. Thinks it would be a good use of that space, next to Kroger. Attorney Blake stated if he is issued a liquor license, the city has no limit on video gaming licenses or liquor licenses, will go through the state. Alderman Bastien tabled the matter until Mr. Martin can be present.

No public comment.

**Mayor Stephens opened discussion for Public Works related items.**

Old business:

Discussion regarding acquiring the property at 432 North 9th Street: Mr. Kennedy stated the owner of the property came in, has been working on the inside. Has had someone flopping there. Mayor Stephens asked about the cost? Mr. Kennedy stated possibly will give it to the city. Mayor Stephens asked then we would demo it. Table it and keep on the agenda.

New business:

Discussion regarding IEPA Loan for Water System Improvement Projects: Mr. Sheffer stated two water tanks and priority list of water projects. Prepared cost estimates for water tower repairs and for the water project and is in the handout. IEPA Loan Forgiveness currently has 60% loan forgiveness, guaranteed. Mayor Stephens stated the water towers and the 14th Street water line is a total cost of 1.4 million, would actually cost us only 40%. Mr. Sheffer stated their project estimates are on the higher end, just in case. Mr. Lee stated the 17th Street water tower will need attention in the very near future. Mayor Stephens stated needs to be done and is very visible. Have Mr. Evans look at the numbers. Mr. Evans stated we have to put money into our infrastructure. It is not budgeted for, look at in 2021. Mr. Sheffer stated can do a funding nomination, they are due at the end of March, it costs nothing. Alderman Pittman stated it is always breaking, will save money in the long run.

Motion: To direct the city engineer to put together a Funding Nomination.

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| Motion by Alderman Hughes | Second by Alderman Erbes |

Mayor Stephens called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

**Motion Carried**

Consideration of Bids to Purchase Surplus Property:

617 Chestnut Street: waiting on the deed, offer of $900 from Robert Green

613 Chestnut Street: city owns, offer of $650 from Robert Green

108 Lee Lane: has been sold

8 South 7th Street: do not own yet

Alderman Pierson asked if they will tear down 617 Chestnut Street? Mr. Kennedy stated he will be re-doing it.

Motion: To accept the two bids from Robert Green for $900 and $650 for the purchase of 617 Chestnut Street and 613 Chestnut Street.

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| Motion by Alderman McComb | Second by Alderman Campos |

Mayor Stephens called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

**Motion Carried**

Public comment:

Alderman Campos stated she had a request brought to her regarding North 15th Street. Suggested everyone drive North 15th Street from Walnut Street to Gartside Street, lots of potholes. Also North 16th Street. North 11th Street has pooled water? It is IDOT right of way. Mr. Mills stated he has called about it before. Chief Ellermeyer stated he called IDOT today. Also 16th Street and Grace. Mr. Mills stated it is being patched all the time. Mr. Mills stated will have to replace all of 15th Street to repair it.

Attendee asked about 501 North Street – going to do anything with it? It is empty. Mr. Kennedy stated it is on the demolition list.

**Alderman Brown opened discussion for Public Safety related items.**

Old business:

Discussion regarding the Gillenberg Property: Chief McBride stated they are getting close, fencing and concrete barricades are up. Mr. Kennedy stated Mr. Rawson obtained the demo permit yesterday. There is a ten day waiting period. Mayor Stephens stated he had a message from Mr. Rawson that he hopes to start on the 25th.

New business: Nothing at this time.

No public comment.

**Alderman Hughes opened discussion for Personnel related items.**

Old business:

Discussion regarding making the position of Mayor as Full-Time: Alderman Pittman asked if we made it a two-year term instead of four years? Can be done with a referendum. Attorney Blake stated the city can address an individual position, does require referendum – put the question on the ballot and present it to the electors. Alderman Pittman asked can we make it full-time and a two-year term at the same time? Attorney Blake answered no, would have to have two separate ballots/referendums. Alderman Hughes stated you have a learning curve of approximately one year then only have one more year in the term. Things take time – for example the hotel and Solar Alliance. Alderman McComb stated need to consider if we want to keep our police officers, need to pay them more. Have to do repairs to the water towers, all that costs money. Alderman Hughes stated working on the contracts, need to pay these employees. Alderman McComb stated Mayor Stephens is doing a good job, need money in a lot of other places. Mayor Stephens stated has said all along, no public works director, budgeted money for a grant writer. There are funds out there for infrastructure. Have this be part of the mayor’s job duties. Alderman Erbes stated the council appointed a special committee to look into this. Not ready to vote, have only met once. Alderman Hughes stated would like to meet one more time and if anyone has anything they would like the committee to research or look into, to let them know. Alderman Pittman stated have until 180 days before the election, would like to meet again. Alderman Campos stated would like the council to consider putting a two-year term on the ballot. Alderman Hughes stated will look into that. Alderman Curry-Witzman stated she agrees with Alderman Erbes, be a progressive enough city to have a full-time mayor. Have $20,000 that was for a grant writer. Need to be progressive, forward thinking, write grants. Full-time mayor is not directly related to Mayor Stephens. We should consider making it a full-time position. Alderman Hughes asked if should set another committee meeting? Alderman Erbes stated yes. Alderman McComb stated he does not think it should be a two-year position.

New business:

Update on Negotiations: Mayor Stephens stated emailed counterproposal to firemen. Alderman Hughes stated thinks we are close.

No public comment.

## MAYOR’S REPORT

Update on the Ruble Flooding Issue: Attorney Blake stated will be contacting Cindy Reiman to set up a meeting.

Consideration of Bid for Awnings Downtown: Some downtown business owners are having to make structural repairs before the awnings can be put up.

Update on Purchase Request from MainStreet: Price listed under the totals is what will be reimbursed to the city.

Motion: To move forward with making purchases for and be reimbursed by MainStreet.

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| Motion by Alderman Campos | Second by Alderman Erbes |

Mayor Stephens called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

**Motion Carried**

## ALDERMEN ANNOUNCEMENTS/REQUESTS

Barb Hughes Nothing

Jance Curry-Witzman Nothing

Russell Brown Nothing

William Pierson Nothing

Gary McComb Nothing

John Erbes Update on hotel and solar, waiting on loans? Mayor Stephens stated Solar seems confident and he has not spoken to Mr. Koppeis recently.

Dan Bratton Absent

Mike Bastien Nothing

Gloria Campos With the downtown beautification – replace the light poles, knows the city would be responsible, like the ones in Carbondale Historic District, very beautiful. Mayor Stephens stated he had met with Brooke Guthman & grant writer from Greater Egypt, there is ITP money available for street lights – 50% grant, 80% if historic district.

W. J. Pittman Parking lot lights at Hardees as you go East on North Street look like high beams, ask if they can be dialed down? Ameren lights? City Clerk Hunziker will check into.

## DEPARTMENT HEAD ANNOUNCEMENTS/REQUESTS

Richard Blake Nothing

Sandra Ripley Reminded everyone to fill out the Statement of Economic Interest

form included in their packet.

Scott Evans Nothing

Harold Sheffer Nothing

Steve McBride Nothing

Jamie Ellermeyer Nothing

Eric Kennedy Nothing

Tim Lee Nothing

Brian Manwaring Absent

Darrin Mills Nothing

Pat Gladson Nothing

Katharine Volle: Nothing

Leandra Bryant Absent

**Motion: To go into executive session at 7:15 pm for Act 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11) meetings held to discuss litigation when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting and Act 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21) meetings for the discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under the Act either for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as required by the Act.**

Motion by Alderman Erbes Second by Alderman Campos

Yeas: Alderman Hughes, Alderman Curry-Witzman, Alderman Brown, Alderman Pierson, Alderman McComb, Alderman Erbes, Alderman Bastien, Alderman Campos, Alderman Pittman

Nays: None

Absent: Alderman Bratton

**Motion Carried**

**Motion: To come out of executive session at 7:43 p.m***.*

Motion by Alderman McComb Second by Alderman Pittman

Yeas: Alderman Hughes, Alderman Curry-Witzman, Alderman Brown, Alderman Pierson, Alderman McComb, Alderman Erbes, Alderman Bastien, Alderman Campos, Alderman Pittman

Nays: None

Absent: Alderman Bratton

**Motion Carried**

#### Motion: To resume regular council meeting at 7:43 p.m.

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| Motion by Alderman Hughes | Second by Alderman Pittman |

Mayor Stephens called for a voice vote. All were in favor. Motion Carried

#### Motion: To release the Executive Session Minutes of 5/23/2017, 6/27/2017, 8/15/2017, 4/24/2018, 10/8/2019 and 12/17/2019.

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| Motion by Alderman Hughes | Second by Alderman Pittman |

Mayor Stephens called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

##### Motion Carried

#### Motion: To adjourn

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| Motion by Alderman McComb | Second by Alderman Pittman |

Mayor Stephens called for a voice vote. All were in favor.

##### Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.