

REGULAR MEETING

December 18, 2023

The Independence City Council met for a Regular Meeting, December 18, 2023, at 6:03 p.m., in the Council Chambers, 111 E. Maple Street, Independence, Missouri.

Shirley Murdock, Member, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, provided the invocation. Sergio Quintero from the Centro Misionero JesuCristo a las Naciones Church also provided the invocation in Spanish.

Mayor Rory Rowland, Presiding Officer of the City Council, called the meeting to order. Upon roll call, the following members were present: Jared Fears, John Perkins, Brice Stewart, Bridge McCandless, Dan Hobart, and Mayor Rory Rowland. Absent – None.

Mayor Rowland asked the Council for a suspension of the rules for two things.

- 1) Recognize citizens, Police Officers, Firefighters and AMR staff for their life-saving efforts of Gene Hoppe.
- 2) Blair Pierce read his essay ‘I’m hopeful because I’m from Independence, Missouri’.

Motion by Fears, Second by McCandless

Motion was passed 6-0

CITIZENS REQUEST TO SPEAK

Janet Young spoke in opposition of Bill 23-799

Butch Nesbitt spoke in opposition of Bill 23-121

Colleen Huff spoke about the Englewood Arts Overlay Arts Project

David Babcock is a KC resident. Councilmember Hobart made a motion to allow him to speak as a property owner in Independence. Seconded by Fears. 6-ayes; 0-nays. He spoke about short term rental program. He owns a short-term rental and long-term rental in Independence.

Janet Evans spoke in opposition of Bill 23-799

Kenneth Love spoke about the purchase of the GEHA building for city offices.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Hobart moved to approve the reports and recommendation of the City Manager. Seconded by Councilmember McCandless. Items pulled for special consideration:

23-800 by Perkins

23-799 by Hobart

Item #20 by Fears

23-792 by McCandless

23-801 by Mayor Rowland

Approval of Consent Agenda Items – Passed 6-0

#20 – Fears – Approved 6-0

- Moved from 12/4 Meeting
- Expense for computer technology at the Fire Dept because it was higher than the other departments.
- Cost has since been reviewed and has been reduced substantially
- Expressed appreciation to staff.
- Reduced by \$60,000 and not to the detriment of IFD

Motion to approve by Fears; seconded by Councilmember Hobart.

#23-792 – McCandless – Approved 6-0

- Requested overview from City Manager
- Add dispatchers and detention personnel to the City's retirement plan
- Several peer cities around Independence have that benefit
- Several of our employees have gone to surrounding cities for this benefit
- Will help with recruitment and retention of personnel in those positions

Motion to approve by McCandless; seconded by Councilmember Hobart

#23-799 – Hobart – Failed – 6-0 Opposed

- Has spoken to a number of people in the 4th district who oppose this.
- He will oppose

Motion to approve by Hobart; seconded by Councilmember Perkins

#23-800 – Perkins – Failed – 6-0 Opposed

- Worked a number of years with member of Kentucky Hills neighborhood to stabilize it.
- Wants to continue that progress.
- Will be voting no

Motion to approve by Perkins; seconded by Councilmember Hobart

#23-801 – Mayor Rowland – 6-0 to postpone indefinitely

- On behalf of Tourism Council, asked City Council to endorse a video contest.
- Asking to postpone indefinitely to look for a different sponsor for the event

Motion to approve by Mayor Rowland; seconded by Councilmember Fears

REGULAR AGENDA

23-114 – Ordinance amending Independence City Code Section 5.01.018 “License Denial, Suspension or Revocation

- McCandless asked City Manager to explain how this gives him additional tools to do the work he needs to do.
- City Manager stated right now all city businesses are required to secure a business license.
- If the business does not follow the proper procedure the only consequence to suspend or revoke a business license are fines, which is punitive.
- We need something more substantial to make sure they are following the policies and procedures.
- This will give the City Manager and City Staff the ability to impose fines to the business owners which will send a message to them without suspending their license.
- McCandless was pleased that the City is trying to find ways to make sure business owners comply with the regulations and still encourage them to do business in Independence.
- 23-114 passes 6 in favor 0 opposed
- This has since been given Ordinance #19512

23-115 – Ordinance authorizing execution of a contract to Black and McDonald, in the amount of \$880,886.55 for 24 Hwy Improvement Steel Pole Installation and making necessary appropriations

- McCandless asked City Manger to give a small overview of this.
- Project is being delivered in 3 different phases.

- It will add safety measures for vehicles and pedestrians, improve lighting and in certain areas will realign and redesign the road, storm water improvements to control flooding
- Being conducted in conjunction with MODOT.
- 23-115 passes 6 in favor 0 opposed
- This has since been given Ordinance #19513

23-116 Ordinance adopting amendments to the Fiscal year 2023-2024 budget which was approved by Ordinance No. 19453.

- 23-116 passes 6 in favor 0 opposed
- This has since been given Ordinance #19514

23-117 An emergency ordinance authorizing purchase orders and a 10-year contract with Axon Enterprise Inc. for Body Worn Cameras, In-Car Video Equipment, Tasers, Records Management Software and other products and services for the Police Department.

- This was read as first and second reading
- Stewart asked the City Manager why we needed to make this an emergency reading.
- PD was able to secure a federal grant for some of this cost
- In exploring technology for these needs this company meets and exceeds our needs
- Able to address older technology that needs to be modernized
- If could get approved by end of the year, a discount would apply
- Fears asked they City Manager how much more than what we would be paying otherwise
- City Manager asked Chief Dustman to address Fears question.
- \$600-800,000 additional funding to cover added technology
- Fears supportive of body cams but cautious that this will be an unfunded liability for the city since it is for 10 years, but is supportive of it.
- 23-117 passes 6 in favor 0 opposed
- This has since been given Ordinance 19515

First readings:

- 23-118
- 23-119
- 23-120

23-120 – Fears has an amendment to add C.1. “Or at private celebratory events including but not limited to birthday or graduation parties”. Amendment will show on second reading for next agenda. Motion to amend Fears; seconded by McCandless

- Purpose of the amendment is due to the restrictions that are being added to the amendment. He wanted to make sure it stated that birthday and graduation parties would be able to be held without any problems.
- Motion passed 6-0 in favor of the amendment

23-121 – Stewart wanted to discuss; questions to the City Manager

- The building will cost.
- Deputy City Manager and Director of Finance to answer questions
- Purchase price is \$9.15 million dollars
- Stewart state we are currently asking for a loan of \$20 million; are we over-estimating the cost of what it will take to remodel the building?
- This is the current best budget projection. Can use extra money for another purpose or prepay the principle.
- Utilities will go in this building; what other departments will go in there?
- IPL and Municipal Services will go in this building; they will pay for their portion of the square footage used by them
- Motivator for the lease purchase of this building is the police construction cost has tripled in the last 5 years.
- Instead of building a \$120 million building; asking to relocate to another building and put the police in the utilities building at 23rd street location.
- \$80 million difference
- This is also to address the severe deficiencies of the Police Department
- IPL will be reimbursed for any space that is being occupied by the PD would reimburse the utilities their cost of rebuilding the site.
- Stewart concerned with no jail at 23rd Street location and separating the police dept.
- What is back up plan if GO bond fails?
- City in process of evaluating 6 responses of the justice center master plan
- If bond fails, we go back to drawing board to figure out what to do with getting the Police Dept into a better facility.
- Councilmember McCandless asked about renovations done to GEHA building in 2020
- Building already has IT but there will be some upgrades and replacement that will need to be done; will also include updated safety features.
- Will try to keep it under \$20 million. If we can, one is pre-pay money back to bank; second request to use it for another use.
- For every month we don't start construction, we can expect approximately ½% inflation.
- Goal would be to start design and construction immediately.
- Fears asked City Manager if the loan is like a home equity line of credit. Deputy City Manager said that it is not. We either pay it off early or use it for another purpose.
- \$20 million is the loan amount with 5.1% interest rate. Can refinance in 2030.
- Cost per square foot to build vs cost per square foot to buy? Comparisons with nearby cities building justice centers current estimate for a justice center construction is \$651/sq ft. Probably a little higher now as their contracts were negotiated some time ago. Cost \$210/sq foot for buying the building.

COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS:

Perkins: Addressed comments made by a citizen of Perkins and McCandless being at the Jackson County Legislature and statements made about Englewood Arts Overlay.

Fears: Discussed Christmas activities and fire retirees. Complimented Blair Pearce's essay that was read.

McCandless: Independence Together funding was extended. Pioneer Ridge Middle School made it to the Battle of the Brains. Special thank you for holiday luncheon for the employees. Bue Ridge Blvd. bridge will have ribbon cutting on January 19th. Gov. Parsons will be in an attendance. Asked for City Manager to discuss that Municipal Services have identified and implemented a new technology a plan to better monitor and execute treatment of the roads when winter weather is coming.

Hobart: Holidays can be a hard time for folks. Missouri now has 988 for an emergency number for those experiencing a mental health crisis. Also made a motion to go into Executive Session regarding a matter of real estate. Seconded by McCandless.

Stewart asked for a legal opinion as to whether this is permitted. Cover stated that it is.

Motion to go into Executive Session passed 6-0

Mayor Rowland - Participated in Wreaths Across America, 400 hundred wreaths laid in cemeteries.

City Manager Zach Walker: New customer service phone system for utilities. New call back feature will allow people to be placed in line for call backs.

November of 021, approved expansion of fire sales tax continues to move forward. Request for designs will start in January.

Discussed part of IPL review associated with retention. DKMT remains on track to have reports completed July 2023 and present publicly to the Council.

Meeting adjourned

Presiding Officer of the City Council
of the City of Independence, Missouri

ATTEST:

City Clerk