

Athens City Council
Committee Meeting
Thursday, February 4, 2021
Zoom Meeting ID: 825-300-3670 / Password: Apr9Athens

Mayor Bob Dowell opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. Clerk Cindy McFarland called roll. Those in attendance were Mayor Bob Dowell, and Aldermen: Amy Chernowsky, Rachel Lantz, Butch Nichols, Chris Reichert, Angella Thompson. Alderman Larry Buhr was absent. Persons in the audience included Ginger Newingham and Police Chief Tim Becker.

Chief Becker presented the Police Report. He said the new squad car was ordered from Nikles of Petersburg about 2-3 weeks ago. The estimated time to receive the vehicle at that time was 12-16 weeks. Chief Becker said that many communities around our area have experienced thefts from vehicles and vehicle thefts. He advised everyone to lock their car doors, remove any valuables that may be inside, and not to approach any individuals that maybe lurking near vehicles. The suspects are considered armed and dangerous. Mayor Dowell presented the Treasurer's report. He also presented the Streets report, providing an equipment update and stating that the electrical update in the shop has been completed. Mayor Dowell presented the Water Report. He explained that the meter for water plant has already been purchased. Three bids were gathered and Badger Meter was the lowest. The meter was purchased for \$4,500. The Mayor asked the council if they thought we should go ahead and start meter shut-offs for non-payment again since COVID mitigations are lessening. The council agreed to restart the shut-offs. Alderman Thompson suggested that we make the decision on a case-by-case basis. Mayor Dowell said that our water clerk has been calling people with delinquent accounts and several have paid up. Mayor Dowell presented the Sewer Report and the Office Manager's report. He said that Budget preparation will begin next week. Also, thirty new water meters were installed and have been updated in our computer system. Mayor Dowell presented the Fleet Maintenance Report. Ginger Newingham presented the Library report. She said the library has 107,000 electronic & audio books available now. Also, planning is going on for the summer reading program including a weekly Wednesday Park Play day where people could come to the park and enjoy outside reading and books would be available to check-out. Ms. Newingham said that a snow cone truck is planned for the last day of school. Also, she wanted to remind the community that free faxing, tutoring, and internet are available at the library. Everyone agreed that the library is an integral part of our community.

First on the discussion agenda was an update on Covid-19. Mayor Dowell said that the electronic sanitizer had been recalled. We are still sanitizing City Hall daily. We have received most of the items purchased with funds from the CARES Act. The council will receive a list of these items. A key fob access system for City Hall was also purchased from these funds. Agility Communications will be installing this next week.

Next was an update on water system improvements. The new water meters have been going in. Our City Engineers will be meeting with us next week to share their suggestions on how the city should proceed with making improvements. Mayor Dowell went on to say that May 13-15 will be the dates for the Glory Days celebration this year. Last on the agenda was the audit report. Everything looked good except a couple of the conflict-of-interest forms were outdated.

The Mayor asked if there was any old business or new business. Alderman Thompson asked if anyone has turned in an application for the small business relief funds. Mayor Dowell said that we are updating a couple sentences on the application currently. Alderman Thompson said that she hopes to have the Farmers Market again this year. Last year we had an issue with low attendance and vendors may not be wanting to return. She suggested changing the location to maybe the sports complex parking lot and holding the market every other Wednesday instead of weekly. Ms. Newingham

suggested the Library front lawn and Chief Becker suggested Abe Lincoln Drive between the Dollar General and Subway. Lastly, the tornado siren has been out of service for a couple months now. Mayor Dowell said that he called the repair company this morning and they will be out next Thursday to meet with him and a representative from the Fire Department to get the siren repaired.

The council adjourned to Executive Session at 7:29pm and returned to regular session at 7:39pm and adjourned.