

CITY OF GENOA
City Hall
City Council Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2023
7:00 P.M.
City Council Chambers
333 East First Street, Genoa, IL 60135

Mayor Brust called the meeting of the City Council to order at 7:03 p.m. Roll call was taken. Aldermen Wesner, Pulley, Freund, Cravatta and Hughes were present. Alderman Stage and Winter were absent. Quorum present.

Mayor Brust led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Guest Speakers – Recognition of Kenna Braheny, the 2023 calendar cover contest winner. Mayor Brust presented a certificate to Kenna Braheny in recognition of her photo that was chosen for the city calendar for the year.

Motion made by Alderman Pulley to accept the minutes of the January 4, 2023 City Council meeting, seconded by Alderman Freund. No further discussion. Voice vote was taken. All voted yes. Motion carried.

Motion made by Alderman Wesner to approve payment of the account's payables for January 15, 2023, seconded by Alderman Pulley. Alderman Cravatta asked about the insurance payment and what that included, Finance director Tures stated that it is for all insurance coverage minus health insurance. Roll call vote was taken. Aldermen Wesner, Pulley, Freund, Cravatta, Hughes and Holcomb voted yes. Motion carried.

ITEMS FROM INDIVIDUALS IN ATTENDANCE – None

OLD BUSINESS - None

FUTURE ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION: None

NEW BUSINESS:

APPROVE A GAS ORDINANCE WITH NICOR: Motion made by Alderman Wesner for approval of a gas ordinance with Nicor, seconded by Alderman Holcomb. The City's current franchise agreement with NICOR Gas is expiring in February 2023. Staff and our consulting legal team have worked with NICOR to reach a mutually agreeable "Gas Ordinance" included in the packet. Highlights of the Ordinance include: • Grants NICOR, under the terms of the agreement, the permission to distribute and sell natural gas in the City of Genoa for 25 years. This means maintaining and operating pipes and mains throughout the community. • NICOR must not injure City infrastructure and/or public improvements through the installation, maintenance, and operation of their own equipment. If they do cause damage, they must repair it themselves or the city will charge NICOR accordingly. • NICOR must indemnify and hold the city harmless, except in the case of negligence on the city's part, for any damages, costs, expenses resulting from the privileges given to NICOR in the agreement (right to provide services). • NICOR shall provide the city with a cash payment of 3.6 therms x 5,298 (city population) x gas rate over 3 years. To compare, under the current agreement (3.0 therms per population) and 3-year cost average, the city received \$8,689.25. Under the new calculations (3.6 therms) the city would have received \$10,427.21. Bernie Anderson and Kevin Gonzalla representatives from Nicor were

at the meeting to introduce themselves and answer any question that council might have. Bernie stated that this franchise agreement is the same model as Bloomington, IL; he also stated that changes to a franchise agreement is very difficult to do because any changes made have to also be transferred to all other franchises. The city won't lose any power by doing the franchise they still have to get permits; they don't pay permit fees however; this is due to the fact that NiCor gives the municipality 3.75% per resident. Alderman Pulley asked if it was common to have a 25year franchise agreement? Bernie stated that the typical length is 50 years not 25 years. Public Works Director Melton asked if there is a specific turnaround time for installation or turnaround time? Bernie stated that there can be problems with the time frame however that is where Kevin would come into play to get keep repairs and installation on track. Generally, they like to keep repairs to under 60 days. If they open something up, they will make a temporary repair if weather conditions are not ideal to make a permanent repair. If this occurs, they will come back out when weather permits and do a final repair. City Administrator, Alyssa stated that Kevin has been great so far even though he is new to this position he has reached out a few times passing along information, information on donation policies and information on gas usage on our building for the audit. Roll call vote was taken. Aldermen Wesner, Pulley, Freund, Cravatta, Hughes and Holcomb voted yes.

APPROVE A STATEMENT OF WORK WITH SIKICH LLP, NOT TO EXCEED \$29,480: Motion made by Alderman Wesner to approve a statement of work with Sikich LLP, not to exceed \$29,480, seconded by Alderman Holcomb. The City of Genoa has contracted with Sikich since 1999 for audit services. Sikich provides auditing services to over 100 governmental clients, making them a prominent auditing firm in Northern Illinois. For over 20 years, Sikich has provided excellent auditing services as well as outstanding resources regarding accounting issues. This year, the costs of these services amount to \$29,480, broken down below. The cost for these services is largely attributed to the City of Genoa Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 2023 Audit, which is required by law. An audit of the Police Pension Fund and an opinion on the generally accepted government auditing standards are also required, which is included in the Statement of Work being considered. City Audit – Not to exceed \$20,760 Pension Audit – Not to exceed \$2,550 Single Audit – IF REQUIRED - \$4,110 GAGAS Opinion – IF REQUIRED - \$2,060. The council stated that they are impressed with their work and have been always great to work with. Roll call vote was taken. Aldermen Pulley, Freund, Cravatta, Hughes and Holcomb voted yes. Motion carried

APPROVE A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE RETIREMENT OF CERTAIN MUNICIPAL INDEBTEDNESS BY THE USE OF MOTOR FUEL TAX FUNDS: Motion made by Alderman Pulley to approve a resolution providing for the retirement of certain municipal indebtedness by the use of motor fuel tax funds, seconded by Alderman Holcomb. If approved, this IDOT Resolution authorizes the City of Genoa to utilize \$100,000 of Motor Fuel Tax Funds to pay the principal on the 2020 Bond issue. The 2020 Bond was issued for street improvements done in 2021 and 2022 and the remainder of the bond is planned to be used for the downtown streetscape project. Alderman Cravatta asked if this has been the plan from the beginning? Finance Director Turess stated that is correct that has been the plan since taking the bond out and that every year it would come out of MFT to pay for the bond payment. Roll call vote was taken. Aldermen Pulley, Freund, Cravatta, Hughes and Holcomb voted yes. Motion carried.

APPROVE AND AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR A HOUSING STUDY: Motion made by Alderman Wesner to approve and authorize the mayor to execute an agreement

with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for a housing study, seconded by Alderman Hughes. The City of Genoa received the RISE Grant through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity amounting to \$33,923.26, which will be provided to the city on a reimbursement basis. These funds will be used for the development of a housing study to be conducted by Northern Illinois University. The housing study will address several issues including but not limited to: workforce housing, identifying infrastructure improvements that would encourage new housing development, and sustaining and growing local businesses serving Genoa residents. The grant agreement in the packet is DCEO's standard agreement provided to award recipients. Staff and Northern Illinois University are committed to meeting objectives under the grant application within the parameters of the grant program. Mayor Brust stated that as a reminder this was for a grant that was filed from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. City Administrator Alyssa stated that the city will be working with NIU on this study. Mayor Brust stated that if passed this will be combined with our comprehensive plan and strategic plan that will be kicked off later this month. This will allow us to do a housing study on Genoa and understand what the future needs are. Alyssa stated that this is a long document and this is their standard document, she tabbed a few pages that they made changes to. Basically, they tailored what the city is spending money on and here is what they are going to do with the money. They also went over timeline; however, this is their standard agreement and if we want the grant funds this is something that we will just have to agree to and NIU is aware of this and is working with other communities with this grand funds as well. Alderman Cravatta stated that as long as this is a grant that is great. Alyssa stated that is not going to cost the city anything to do the housing study and it is going to help the city with the cost of the comprehensive plan. The department of commerce and economic study stated that they would really like it if we could get this done by the end of the year. Alyssa does not know how realistic it is to get this done and the comprehensive plan completed by the end of the year but it is something that we can work towards; they are also planning on releasing another grant at the end of the year to help implement what your plan finds. Roll call vote was taken. Aldermen Pulley, Freund, Cravatta, Hughes and Holcomb voted yes. Motion carried.

APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF RESIDENTIAL WATER METERS AND RADIOS, NOT TO EXCEED \$23,716: Motion made by Alderman Holcomb to approve the purchase of residential water meters and radios, not to exceed \$23,716, seconded by Alderman Hughes. Alderman Hughes asked for clarification on the purchase. Public Works Director Janice stated that water meters have to be replaced approximately every 10-20 years after that they start to not read correctly; this also covers new installation of meters for new construction. Roll call vote was taken. Aldermen Pulley, Freund, Cravatta, Hughes and Holcomb voted yes. Motion carried.

APPROVE AND AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO APPROVE A STATEMENT OF WORK, SUBJECT TO ATTORNEY REVIEW, WITH INVOICE CLOUD: Motion made by Alderman Cravatta to approve and authorize the mayor to approve a statement of work, subject to attorney review, with invoice cloud, seconded by Alderman Holcomb. Staff has been working with Invoice Cloud to discuss streamlining several internal manual processes and providing an interactive website which allows residents to obtain information regarding their utility bills. With this website, residents would also be able to enroll in paperless utility billing, receive email and text reminder alerts, as well as pay their utility bill by check or with credit card online or by text. Residents would not be required to utilize this service – payments will still be accepted via cash and check via mail and in person as well as by card at City Hall. However, providing these payment options is intended to make paying utility bills more convenient, just like residents pay their other utilities.

Additionally, giving residents the capability of looking up their account information and enrolling in paperless billing will reduce the number of calls City Hall receives regarding bills not received in the regular mail (approximately 50 bills per month), as well as reduce the time and cost of reprinting/remailing replacement bills. Invoice Cloud also sends a daily file with the online payments that were received, and the City's Utility Billing Clerk can upload it directly into our Locis software, instead of manually applying each payment. Invoice Cloud charges a monthly fee of \$250 in addition to \$.35 per month for every account that utilizes their service. For those that enroll in the service, the city will no longer print or mail those residents' bills at a cost savings of over \$.50/month per (not including labor cost savings). Staff's ultimate goal is to make our utility billing process as user-friendly as possible and we believe this service will assist us in achieving that, as well as being more cost and time efficient. *Note: Staff reached out to Byron, Pecatonica and Marseilles who currently use Invoice Cloud Services and Locis. They all indicated that the services integrate well with the Locis software and has helped reduce phone calls regarding lost bills in the mail, in addition to the residents having flexible options regarding how they can pay their bills. Alderman Cravatta expressed that he is happy that residents are now able to pay and see their bill online, Alderman Cravatta asked if there is a cost to the residents? City Administrator Alyssa stated that it depends on how the resident pays, if they pay by credit card there is a credit card fee, if you pay over the phone it's \$ 0.95, if you pay online it's a minimum of \$2.95 if you do an e-check it's \$0.95. Automatic withdraw from the bank is \$0.95. Residents will not get their bill emailed to them instead of the cost of mailing, staff printing, sending all of them out and manually printing and entering in payments into the current software, it will just automatically post the payment. There are a lot of extra features such an automatic reminder through texting and email. This service does integrate with our current software. There is a license fee of \$250 per month for 5 years agreement (*by doing the 5-year agreement the city does not have the \$5,000 upfront cost of the program*) plus \$0.35 per bill per resident. Roll call vote was taken. Aldermen Pulley, Freund, Cravatta, Hughes and Holcomb voted yes. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Finance Report – Treasurer & Finance Director, Jan Tures stated that there was a finance committee meeting this morning that Alderman Cravatta will update everyone later. We are into the budget process, almost done figuring out capital have a few items that are still being reviewed that were in question. Operating budgets have been returned to Jan, which they are currently inputting now and will be meeting with department heads next week. Mayor Brust reminded everyone that it is getting close to the end of any projects that alderman would like to see done or anything that needs to be completed to reach out to staff to get this looked at and approved for the next budget year.

Public Works – Public Works Director, Janice Melton stated that 4 permits were issued for NiCor yesterday they will be completing some repairs. ComEd and Intren will be completing some work at Country View Apartment area. Safety training was completed, they will have more detailed training in the near future for OSHA. Sewer jetting is taking place, trying to narrow down worse case scenarios as far as root intrusion which contributes to infiltration and areas of back up. Tree trimming is moving along. Little salt has been used which is great and the staff has been able to get things completed since they are not out plowing and the weather has been warmer. They are going to start cleaning up some areas in the forest area to get ready for Spring planting of around 200 trees for the grant that the city received. Any volunteers that would like to help plant trees would be appreciated. We have been in contact with Fair Graham (they are the ones that were hired to help with the lead service line replacement) their team is progressing nicely with the specification and package, they are 50-60% complete at present and they are cleaning up; a list of questions was received at public works, the questions were all answered and returned back to them within 24 hours. A note was made to fix the vent above Alderman Wesner's seat that is rattling.

Police Department – Deputy Chief Edwards stated that they are working on finalizing the budget. Nothing else to report.

Administrative Report – City Administrator, Alyssa Seguss stated that they have their first comprehensive plan meeting next week. Budgeting is taking up quite a bit of department heads time right now. There maybe a February Planning Commission meeting for a new commercial building in town, there has been some changes here and there for this building if not February then hopefully March. Still working on downtown street scape project, the architect is well on their way for the color renderings of what the downtown will look like when they are done. Working with someone for marketing fliers to start sharing with the public and socializing the project and then engineering is well underway with their drawings so that we can go out to bid in the next few months and get that project finalized by the end of the year.

Committee, Boards and Commission Reports (WTC, EDC, PC, PC, PP, TB, DBC AND FAC) – Waste Water Treatment Committee did not meet this month.

Economic Development Committee- The Director of Chamber came out to their last meeting and talked about some of their economic development efforts they have, they have a private enterprise that will buy property and sell property that has really spring boarded a lot of their property. They have some unique geographical advantages to their community that was talked about. They also talked about some of the things that both communities could do the same like an incubator space or artisan market, which got our EDC thinking a lot about different things. It was great to make the connection with them and that they were willing to share the information with us. February 14th will be another EDC meeting that is intended to talk about some marketing proposals that they have received back and weather they would like to look into that.

Planning Commission- Did not meet.

Police & Fire Commission- Met today and talked about hopefully in the Spring start testing for new hires and lateral and possibly looking at promotional testing. Schools are still booked up; the city is currently #70, the city did get into a school in August. Otherwise, all the other schools are booked for 1-2 years.

Tree Board- The tree board has not met in awhile however public works is working on getting them back together. Their main focus at this time is the horticulture specifications manual. It was updated a couple of years ago. Many people retired from the board.

Downtown Beatification Committee- Moving along lots of communication back and forth, there is some exciting information that will be shared with the council in the near future, the committee has some renderings of downtown that they will share in the near future as well as some ideas for Emmett Street.

Finance Committee- Alderman Cravatta stated that they met this morning, they talked about a couple different policies that are going to be presented to the council, 1 being the fund balance (how the funds are split up between general fund and public works) 2nd another document will be presented on the investment policy, as of now we don't have an investment policy or fund balance policy; this was brought up on the last audit. The committee is cleaning up some of these items that were suggested by the audit.

Mayor's Report – Mayor Brust stated that he has no report tonight.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Mayor Brust announced that the annual chamber dinner is Wednesday February 15th and any council members and their spouses that would like to attend please let Alyssa know tonight.

Motion to adjourn the meeting of the City Council was made by Alderman Wesner, seconded by Alderman Pulley. Voice vote was taken. All voted yes. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.