**Harrisburg City Council**

**Special Meeting**

**City Hall**

**110 E. Locust Street**

**Harrisburg, Il 62946**

**March 26, 2024**

**4:00 p.m.**

The Harrisburg City Council held a special meeting on March 24, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. at City Hall located at 110 E. Locust Street, Harrisburg, IL.

Mayor John McPeek called the meeting to order. Mayor John McPeek presided over the meeting with Commissioners Raymond Gunning, Roger Angelly, Rupert Johnson and Cynthia Potter answering roll call.

Commissioner Raymond Gunning led the group in prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Roger Angelly discussed with council the need to increase the water and sewer rates. This increase is a result of materials and Saline Valley who is our water supplier. We have not passed on the Saline Valley increase in several years. This council does not like doing this, but we have not choice. We are in the process of changing billing systems which we hope will change some things, but that is a slow process. The master meter at Saline Valley is being changed, but that will also take time. Saline Valley has increased their rates by 33%

It is at the recommendation of Illinois Rural Water that we lower the minimum usage to 2,000 gallon after that raise to $3.16 per 1,000 and the sewer to $3.14 per 1,000.

We will probably start having to raise the rate every year with the consumer price index and/or with the price increase if Saline Valley present us with a price increase. Commissioner Roger Angelly would like council to consider looking at other water sources. We should always have other options available.

Commissioner Roger Angelly made the motion to accept the recommendation of Illinois Rural Water Association as presented to at the March 21, 2024 council meeting and to authorize Attorney Kolby Smithpeters to draft the water and sewer rate ordinance decreasing the 3,000

gallon minimum to 2,000 gallon minimum, and increasing the prices per 1,000 $3.16, increasing the sewer $3.14, and may increase the yearly bill per the consumer index price and/or the Saline Valley increase. Seconded by Commissioner Raymond Gunning. A roll call vote was taken with all present voting yes. Motion carried.

Mayor John McPeek stated he believes we have an issue with Code Enforcement, he believes we can come together as a council and make the necessary changes to improve the appearance of our city. He stated “I think we all have forgotten the reason we have been elected. We have been elected to the serve the citizens, not for self-serving reasons and not for personal gain.”

“He stated we all have a role in the city and it is to make each department better, more effective, and to better our community”. Mayor John McPeek asked if anyone else would like to make a comment because moving forward, we will address conflicts in a more professional and positive manner. We have several new projects coming to Harrisburg and we cannot jeopardize those with internal strife.

Commissioner Rupert Johnson addressed council stating they all agreed not to meddle in each other’s department and to treat each other with respect. He was re-elected because he does a good job. He has good men in his department that he depends on and the trust. Commissioner Rupert Johnson stated he does not believe a lot of people understand Code Enforcement. There are a lot of misconceptions about Code Enforcement. Commissioner Rupert Johnson went on to discuss the issue about a piece of property in town, and this issue has since been cleaned up.

Commissioner Cynthia Potter stated there are a lot of inoperable vehicles, trash, and waste in this town. She would like to see the town as clean as possible. She believes a clean town will entice investors to come to Harrisburg and start new businesses. She said with the way our town currently looks, it is less likely for investors to want to come here. We need to give our community hope for a brighter future. Commissioner Rupert Johnson stated his department offers help with clean up.

There was an open discussion regarding rules and regulation for code enforcement and the process of issuing tickets. The tickets are petty offenses and some of the offenses are not code enforcement issues. The discussion included options on how to improve the process clean up. Council agreed there needs to be change. There could also be a program for inoperable vehicles.

Commissioner Raymond Gunning stated his suggestion is the city should hire a part-time employee or hire summer time employees for the code enforcer. Commissioner Roger Angelly stated current employees could help the code enforcer. We cannot afford to hire additional employees for code enforcement. He stated the code enforcer can drive a dump truck and current employees can help the code enforcer. When he arrives to a place that is seems unsafe/dangerous, Police Chief Nathan Moore stated he has responded to David Williams and assisted when needed.

Commissioner Roger Angelly stated he understand our citizens do not want to live next to these kind of homes especially with the property taxes we are all paying. People need help and we have been elected to help our citizens.

Mayor John McPeek stated everyone is in agreement the city needs to tear down these house. In fact, last year the city tore down almost thirty houses. We have a list for this year. The city is working very hard to clean up the abandoned and burned out houses.

Commissioner Cynthia Potter stated it was never her suggestion to switch any department or switch anyone around, but rather make a committee, share, and create ideas to solve the problem. She needs to feel like she is heard, but there is a block when she is addressing some issues.

City Clerk Terri Jenkins stated the council needs to review the code book. The code book needs to be revised and updated. She stated she will work with each commissioner, department and Attorney Kolby Smithpeters to revise the code book. She stated that because the city is not home ruled, the city can create ordinances via state statutes that can be enforced to help make the city look better; however, unless council enforces their own codes the code book is useless. She will get everyone another copy of the code book and this will be a project for each commissioner. She encouraged them to make necessary changes to help the city move forward in efforts to clean up the city.

Commissioner Roger Angelly stated the code enforcer will stay in Commissioner Rupert Johnson’s department. He wants the city to prosper too. Commissioner Cynthia Potter stated if the code enforcer is a sworn city officer, does it not make sense for him to be under the Public Health and Safety Commissioner and still be able to use the street/alley equipment? Commissioner Raymond Gunning stated they can still work together without moving anyone.

The code enforcer is currently listed under the Mayor according to the code book. Superintendent Kenny Mayhall stated the code enforcer has worked by himself for years and has asked for help when needed. Mayor John McPeek stated summer help only works out for a short period of time and they fizzle out after a few weeks.

Commissioner Roger Angelly made the motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Rupert Johnson. A roll call vote was taken with all present voting yes. Motion carried.

Adjourn: 4:37 p.m.