

CITY OF MUSCATINE  
IN-DEPTH COUNCIL MINUTES  
Council Chambers - 7:30 p.m. - May 9, 1996

The City Council In-Depth meeting for Thursday, May 9, 1996, was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mayor Dick O'Brien. The following Councilmembers were present: Phil Fitzgerald, Heckenliable, Gary Gray, Dan Gray, Freese, and Churchill. The following staff were also present: City Administrator Johnson, Fire Chief Dalbey, Building & Zoning Administrator Boka, and Health & Housing Specialist Tony Martin.

The first item on the agenda for Council consideration was an overview of a request from the Muscatine County Civil Defense Director Jeff Carter on the City's warning signal system. Mr. Carter was present to give a presentation to Council concerning his recommendation as to the change of designation of warning signals associated with outdoor sirens. Mr. Carter is proposing a change that when a certain signal is sounded, people would know to tune in their local media to find out what emergency is happening so that they can respond appropriately. Mr. Carter has checked with state and federal agencies dealing with this issue and there is no problem. He will be back at City Council's meeting on May 16, 1996 for Council's formal acceptance of this request. He also raised a letter of request from Bandag Incorporated for placement of a new siren near their headquarters and training center at the intersection of Highways 61 and 38.

The next item for Council's consideration was an overview of a tourism service contract. Mr. Michael Gould, Executive Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce, was present to review the document that had been previously submitted to City Council. Mr. Gould stated that he felt that the City and the Chamber would benefit from having a defined agreement outlining the responsibilities of both parties for contract services for tourism activities through the Chamber of Commerce. He also reviewed other information concerning what other communities our size and larger do in such an arrangement. He felt the advantages to City Council and to the Chamber was that they could objectively evaluate the services, better define the roles of each organization and tourism-related activities, use the document for funding review, etc. In closing Mr. Gould asked the Council to seriously consider such a document.

The next item on the agenda for Council's consideration was employment vacancy reviews. City Administrator Johnson presented an overview concerning the present vacancies that are throughout the City. At the directive of City Council, there was a self-imposed hiring freeze on all City departments and each vacancy that comes open has to be reviewed independently by City Council. City Administrator Johnson gave an overview of those positions that are vacant and requested that City Council authorize the filling of the vacancies and for staff to begin to prepare a more comprehensive plan for dealing with budget shortcomings in the future. There was various discussion from Councilmembers concerning these vacancies. Also, Fire Chief Dalbey commented on the use of volunteers and the associated costs with them. There was continued discussion from Council concerning the positions. Also, Mr. Glenn Moench, 3015 Grandview Avenue, got up and spoke to Council asking them to consider filling the positions and to place their emphasis on public safety, meaning police and fire.

#14704. Councilmember Gary Gray moved to fill the 5 1/2 positions that are currently vacant; i.e., City Clerk Aide, Records Clerk, Fire Captain, Fire Fighter, Equipment Operator I, and Equipment Operator I (half-time). Seconded by Councilmember Freese.

#14705. Councilmember Phil Fitzgerald moved to amend the original motion to delete the position of Fire Captain until such time that the position becomes vacant. Seconded by Councilmember Heckenliable. Motion failed (4-2).

Vote on original motion - Four ayes and two nays; motion carried.

The next item on the agenda for City Council's consideration was an overview of scattered housing site issues. City Administrator Johnson introduced Steve Boka, Building & Zoning Administrator, who gave an overview of scattered site housing issues pertaining to demolition and possible rehabilitation. Council had previously received a handbook of information concerning properties that might be likely candidates for some type of action by Council. There was various discussion from Council and staff concerning dilapidated buildings and the possible uses for them. Also during this discussion, Mr. Tony Martin, Health & Housing Specialist, spoke to Council concerning these issues as well. It was determined that City staff would come back to Council at an informational meeting on Thursday, May 23, 1996, to discuss this matter further.

The next item for Council's consideration was a request from Muscatine County to allow for the connection of the sanitary sewer line hookup and to waive the fees associated with it. Building & Zoning Administrator Boka reviewed the request with City Council members.

#14706. Councilmember Gary Gray moved to approve the request from Muscatine County to allow for the connection of the sanitary sewer line hookup and to waive fees associated with it. Seconded by Councilmember Phil Fitzgerald. All ayes (6-0). Motion carried.

Under the comment section, Councilmember Churchill recognized the award winning work of Kristin McHugh of the local radio station and thanked her for her work in dealing with City Council. Also, City Administrator Johnson asked Councilmembers to contact his office to confirm whether or not they will be attending next week's Chamber luncheon.

#14707. Councilmember Churchill moved the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Councilmember Heckenliable. All ayes; motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



A.J. Johnson  
City Administrator