

FARMERSVILLE CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
December 17, 2013

The Farmersville City Council met in special session on December 17, 2013 at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall with the following members present: Mayor Helmberger, John Klostermann, Michael Carr, Michael Hesse, Russell Chandler and Jim Foy. Staff members present were City Manager Ben White, City Attorney Alan Lathrom, Police Chief Mike Sullivan, Fire Chief Kim Morris, Finance Director Daphne Hamlin, Assistant to the City Manager Paula Jackson, Court Clerk Christi Dowdy, Librarian Trisha Dowell and City Secretary Edie Sims.

**Item I) CALL MEETING TO ORDER, ROLL CALL**

Mayor Helmberger called the meeting to order. Edie Sims called the roll and announced a quorum was present. Mayor Helmberger welcomed all guests and visitors. Jim Foy offered the invocation with Mayor Helmberger leading the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

County Commissioner Chris Hill came and presented two checks from Collin County. One check in the amount of \$150,000 was the award for the Collin County Open Space Grant. The second check in the amount of \$15,119.33 is the annual funding for the Charles J. Rike Memorial Library for Fiscal Year 2013-2014.

Mayor Helmberger announced City offices will be closed December 23<sup>rd</sup> through December 25<sup>th</sup> for the Christmas Holiday. The next Council meeting will be held on January 14, 2014 and returning to our regular schedule.

Mayor Helmberger also announced during the recent Fire Department Banquet, the City and Staff received a plaque of appreciation for support of the Fire Department.

Fire Chief Kim Morris announced that during the Fire Department Banquet, Mike Sullivan was announced as Fire Fighter of the Year.

Michael Carr offered appreciation to Mayor, City Manager and staff during the recent ice storm. The events showed a great display of dedication to our citizens.

**Item II) CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Helmberger asked the Council if any items were needed to be pulled for discussion. Jim Foy requested Item A be pulled. Michael Carr motioned to approve Items B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I and J with John Klostermann seconding the motion. A poll of the Council was taken as follows: John Klostermann yes, Michael Carr yes, Michael Hesse yes, Russell Chandler yes and Jim Foy yes. Motion passed with full Council approval.

Item A – City Council Minutes. Jim Foy requested the November 5<sup>th</sup> minutes be amended under Item II – A page 2 to state “Jim Foy questioned if the submittals met all the City’s requirements, if the Council must approve. City Attorney Alan Lathrom indicated Mr. Foy was correct, that if all aspects of the City’s Ordinances are fulfilled then the Council must approve.” Jim Foy motioned to approve the minutes with the amendment as stated. Michael Carr seconded the motion. A poll of the Council was taken as follows: John Klostermann yes, Michael Carr yes, Michael Hesse yes, Russell Chandler yes and Jim Foy yes. Motion passed with full Council approval.

**Item III) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

Council did not request further information or clarification regarding Informational Items.

**ITEM IV – A) SECOND READING – CONSIDER, DISCUSS AND ACT UPON AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE #2009-37 PERTAINING TO GARAGE SALES**

At the last meeting, Mayor Helmberger stated he understood the discussion and changes were deemed as the first reading and the reading for tonight's meeting was the second reading. With that, Mayor Helmberger asked the Council for discussion for the second reading of the amended ordinance. With no discussion, Michael Carr motioned to approve the amended ordinance as presented with John Klostermann seconding the motion. A poll of the Council was taken as follows: John Klostermann yes, Michael Carr yes, Michael Hesse yes, Russell Chandler yes and Jim Foy yes. Motion passed with full Council approval.

**ITEM V – A) CONSIDER, DISCUSS AND ACT UPON TRANSFERRING PROPERTY FROM THE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY TO THE CITY OF FARMERSVILLE**

City Manager Ben White informed the Council of property that was donated to the Habitat for Humanity in 2009. This property is in the floodplain and not usable for the needs that Habitat for Humanity had in mind. In order to have the property taken off the tax rolls, Habitat for Humanity has asked the City to revert the deed back to the City as this property is also adjacent to the City's Public Works Maintenance Barn. Mr. White indicated the land will be used to store materials and being in the floodplain will not affect how the City will utilize the area.

In response to this topic, Habitat for Humanity has asked the City to donate a couple of lots where homes could be built. Information for this transaction will be brought to the Council in the near future.

John Klostermann motioned to approve transferring the property from Habitat for Humanity to the City of Farmersville with Jim Foy seconding the motion. A poll of the Council was taken as follows: John Klostermann yes, Michael Carr yes, Michael Hesse yes, Russell Chandler yes and Jim Foy yes. Motion passed with full Council approval.

**ITEM V – B) CONSIDER, DISCUSS AND ACT UPON A CONTRACT WITH TYLER TECHNOLOGIES FOR ON-LINE BILL PAYMENT SERVICES**

City Manager Ben White stated he would like to offer the same services for online bill payment to customers when the electrical system comes online with the City of Farmersville. Tyler Technologies is the software provider for our Incode program used for the City's financial software system. The contract presented will allow our customers to pay their electric bill as well as water, sewer, refuse and other services from our website. A one-time set-up fee will cost \$800 to initiate the program. A monthly fee of \$102 will be charged. To host the application, for the utility billing, the annual fee will be \$624. To add the Court component will be an additional \$600 per year.

Mayor Helmberger recalled a processing fee that was removed from the Master Fee Schedule and questioned if this fee would need to be reinstated. Mr. White encouraged the Council to absorb this fee as a cost of business with no additional charges to the customer. Mayor Helmberger questioned the \$1.25 fee per transaction. Jim Foy stated the service is beneficial and we should not charge the \$1.25 fee per transaction. More information will need to be attained regarding the per transaction fees as Mr. White was not sure why this was included in the contract.

Jim Foy motioned to approve the contract provided we understand the per-transaction fee is not charged to our customers. The amount due from the customer must be identical to the amount charged. Mr. White indicated the City has the ability to change the amount due to

circumstances such as late fees. Mayor Helmberger agreed there are issues to work out for the start up, but this will allow more flexibility to our customers to pay online. Michael Hesse seconded the motion. A poll of the Council was taken as follows: John Klostermann yes, Michael Carr yes, Michael Hesse yes, Russell Chandler yes and Jim Foy yes. Motion passed with full Council approval.

**ITEM V – C) DISCUSS RECENT LOSS OF WATER SERVICE ON NOVEMBER 30, 2013 AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS**

City Manager Ben White informed the Council of an issue regarding loss of water on November 30<sup>th</sup>. At approximately 9:30pm the South Tower lost communication with the SCADA system. The SCADA is the master system for the entire water system which operates the pumps to turn on or shut off. The SCADA system has an alarm system that calls staff however when staff acknowledged the alarm, the alarm no longer continued. After investigation, the pumps stopped at 6:30am and the City had used all the water from the towers during the course of the day. When staff arrived to investigate, the initial thought was a huge water leak. When found not to be the case, the problem was thought to be computer related.

The SCADA system was then operated manually until the source of the problem was found. Track-N-Trol was called in to assist and found the configuration files were lost and therefore reconfigured the SCADA system.

Mr. White stated he would like to upgrade the SCADA utilizing a grant in a couple of years. The upgrade will presently cost \$11,600. In the meantime, the alarm has been reset so that the alarm will continue to contact staff until the alarm code has been cleared, not just acknowledged.

The main problem resolved during this exercise was the pressure transducer which showed blips which relayed to the SCADA system the tower needed the pumps turned on. The investigation showed the pumps were turning on unnecessarily. A staff member wrapped the transducer with heat tape in preparation of the cold weather to protect and insulate the equipment. Unfortunately, the heat tape caused the transducer to misread the pumping needs which ultimately caused the pumps to lock up due to too many power cycles.

This issue has been reconciled with professional insulation being installed both on the North and South towers. Training was performed immediately with all the Public Works staff.

Mayor Helmberger stated he appreciated the quick response of the Fire Chief as he advised other departments to be available for emergency response due to water issues. Mr. White indicated he will be looking into upgrades so this problem does not reoccur. Jim Foy noted this could have been disastrous if there had been a structure fire.

**ITEM V – D) UPDATE ON ELECTRICAL SYSTEM INCLUDING ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE RECENT ICY WEATHER CONDITIONS AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

City Manager Ben White reported the beginning of the issues with the downed power occurred December 6<sup>th</sup> at approximately 4:15am. The power was down approximately 18 hours throughout the City of Farmersville and the majority of the electric grid. The ice storm caused tree limbs to break and fall which broke and downed power lines. Power was returned completely on December 12<sup>th</sup> for remainder of single services. Most services were back on December 6<sup>th</sup> between 9-10:00pm. The West side of the City came up first as the sewer and water pumps are on the West side of the City. Single services came last as it was imperative to have public services activated first.

Mr. White reviewed a list of suggested improvements which first began with installation of generators with automatic transfer switches at the Public Safety Building, City Hall and the Public Works Maintenance Barn. Radios are also critical for communication. The generator at City Hall was activated but the phone system was not connected to allow power to the phone system. Additionally, VHF radios will operate when cell towers are down allowing communication to public servants. At no cost to the City, Chief Sullivan has implemented a code red notification system through the County.

Police Chief Mike Sullivan stated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was implemented early and issues were dispersed by priority. A generator was brought to the Public Safety Building so portable radios could be charged. The generators are essential as cell phones do not always work.

Mr. White has asked our IT Department to investigate a 24 hour lan-line telephone system to backup our phone system during a situation. Facebook was very active and became a good tool of communication between the Mayor and Mr. White with the Public Safety crews. Other alternative communication methods need to be implemented. Mr. White stated he has considered having an AT&T dedicated line for emergencies even though Time Warner is our current phone provider. Wireless cards will also need to be available for computers.

This ice storm brought to light the need for alternatives when we take over the electrical system, including the phone capacity and how to handle the influx of calls during a situation/disaster. It was suggested to have an alternate form online to report issues. Code Red can also help solve by concentrating on critical calls first. John Klostermann suggested having a recording informing the caller the City's knowledge of the situation giving the opportunity for the caller to wait for an operator if beyond informing of an outage.

Mr. White stated experience will improve the processes. Jim Foy stated the City's website is a good tool, but the City may consider having a Facebook page. Mr. White stated Nixel is another information tool as well although it is not interactive. Michael Hesse stated he would encourage another method of informing the public other than Facebook.

Chief Sullivan stated Nixel has interactive earmarks to City Council and City Staff essentially like Code Red. Mayor Helmsberger noted if the City's phone lines were up it would have made a positive difference.

The last item discussed by Mr. White was the easements which have physical barriers including trees and fences which make clearing and work within the easements difficult. The City will need to take measures to have the easements cleared. This was a good learning experience prior to taking over the electric system.

**ITEM V – E) DISCUSS OVERTIME BUDGET RELATED TO POLICE DEPARTMENT OVERSIGHT ON THE CHAPARRAL TRAIL**

Police Chief Mike Sullivan reported that his Department does not have an overtime budget. Traditionally if overtime is required, the officers would use Compensatory Time. However Comp Time is a double edged sword since Police staff are on forced vacation due to the amount of Comp Time accrued. Other staff must cover the shifts which in-turn creates more Comp Time.

There has been a lot of activity along the Chaparral Trail, but with Police presence, the activity has slowed down. Two officers were working Saturday and Sunday with a planned schedule of 5 hours. To accommodate this schedule, the cost equaled \$675 per day. The Police Department recently purchased an ATV through seized funds. With the purchase of a second ATV, the Department will be equipped to patrol the Chaparral Trail. This is a small price to pay for security.

Mayor Helmberger stated the patrolling has made a noticeable difference and has noticed the vandalism has stopped. Jim Foy stated the cost equals approximately \$30,000 annually for this service.

City Manager Ben White was not suggesting to fund the \$30,000 but to understand this cost factor. If vandalism continues, this may be the only method of controlling the issue. If the Council chose to fund the officers, then a budget amendment would be prepared and presented. Mayor Helmberger stated a network of contacts along the Trail helps tremendously since a lot of the offenders are repeaters.

Chief Sullivan expressed he has one officer on duty weekends and that officer needs to be in the City and not on an ATV.

**ITEM VI) REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION OF PLACING ITEMS ON FUTURE AGENDAS**

Jim Foy requested a discussion regarding traffic issues at McKinney Street and State Highway 78. No one else requested items for future agendas.

**ITEM VII) ADJOURNMENT**

Council adjourned at 6:09pm.

APPROVED

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Joseph E. Helmberger, P.E., Mayor

ATTEST

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Edie Sims, City Secretary