

CITY OF SOUTH BELOIT
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
March 18, 2024

CALL TO ORDER: 5:00 pm, Council Chambers, City Hall by Mayor Fitzgerald

ROLL CALL: Present & answering to roll call were Commissioners Adleman, Hedrington, Morse, Prentice, and Mayor Fitzgerald.
City Attorney Roxanne Sosnowski was present
City Administrator Sonya Hoppes was present
City Clerk Tracy Patrick recorded the minutes
Department Heads in attendance:
Police Chief Adam Truman
Street Superintendent Steve Haas
Fire Chief Jason Griffin
Community Development Director Shawna Henthorn

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Mayor Fitzgerald and recited by all members present.

INVOCATION: Finance Director, Don Elliott delivered the invocation.

APPROVE AGENDA: Commissioner Adleman made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Prentice second the motion. Voice vote carried the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Jack Redieske said he does not live within the limits of the City of South Beloit, and as a former firefighter spoke in opposition of the City entering into an agreement with the Town of Beloit for fire services. Mr. Redieske said he is in favor of South Beloit continuing to have its own Fire Department. Mr. Redieske asked where the savings have gone from not having to pay full-time personnel at the Fire Department. Mr. Redieske would like the City to hold a Public Meeting for questions and answers, and said he has spoken with previous firefighters who would be willing to come and fill in. Mayor Fitzgerald spoke about the lack of employees in the Fire Department for several years, and the issue the City has with full-time employees leaving to go to other departments after they are trained. Mr. Redieske voiced concern over the City not being covered. Commissioner Adleman said the City has been covered by mutual aid for years. Commissioner Morse said if the City does not contract for full-time firefighters now within 3-5 years the city would have to. The issue is there are no volunteers stepping up. Bob Redieske said Council's job to get a full-time Chief and stated if there was a full-time Chief the volunteers may come. Mr. Redieske said though Chief Griffin is a fine Chief, he is only part-time. Josh Redieske spoke about the cost of contracting with the Town of Beloit and said it will not be cheaper. Commissioner Adleman said pay rates were implemented as well as sign on bonuses offered. Mayor Fitzgerald spoke about the issues of having limited or no people to respond in the Fire Department. Mayor Fitzgerald said 82% of the current staff at the Fire Department do not live in South Beloit. The City needs to staff a Fire Department that is there every day. Full-time firefighters will be there every day with the Town of Beloit.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
1. Commissioner Adleman made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on February 19, 2024, the Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on

March 4, 2024, and the Minutes of the Public Hearing held on March 4, 2024. Commissioner Prentice second the motion. Voice vote carried the motion.

REPORT OF OFFICER

1. Finance:

Commissioner Morse made a motion to approve the claims paid from March 2 - 15, 2024 in the amount of \$387,806.18. Commissioner Adleman second the motion. Roll call vote showed 5 ayes.

2. Attorney Report:

3. Reports:

City Administrator Report and Staff Report
Accounts and Finance-Commissioner Ryan Adleman
Health & Public Safety-Commissioner Ken Morse
Streets & Public Improvement-Commissioner Brian Hedrington
Public Properties-Commissioner Courtney Prentice
Mayor-Tom Fitzgerald

ORDINANCES-SECOND READ:

- a. Commissioner Prentice made a motion to approve the second reading of Ordinance 2776 Adopting a revised Zoning Code. Commissioner Morse second the motion. Attorney Sosnowski said all comments have been addressed. Council discussed pavement thicknesses and recreational vehicle parking. Council was unable to come to a consensus regarding the requirements for recreational vehicles. Commissioner Adleman made a motion to layover Ordinance 2776 Adopting a revised Zoning Code. Commissioner Prentice second the motion. Roll call vote showed 5 ayes.
- b. Commissioner Adleman made a motion to approve the second reading of Ordinance 2785 amending Chapter 2 Administration, Article VI, Finance, Division 2, Purchasing. Commissioner Prentice second the motion. Roll call vote showed 5 ayes.
- c. Commissioner Adleman made a motion to approve the second reading of Ordinance 2786 amending the City's Handbook Policy. Attorney Sosnowski reviewed 2 changes to the handbook regarding Bereavement Leave and Inclement Weather. Commissioner Prentice second the motion. Mayor Fitzgerald voiced concern regarding the Inclement Weather section and stated he is worried about employees being penalized if the employee has no available time and is unable to come to work due to the weather. Mayor Fitzgerald also had concern with the safety of employees trying to get to work if the weather is too bad for travel. Attorney Sosnowski explained there is no discipline outlined in the section of the handbook for not coming to work in the event the employee does not have available time in their benefits bank. The City Administrator is able to handle anything she believes may be an issue for abuse of the provision. Attorney Sosnowski explained new law that provides an extension of Bereavement Leave to 10 days. Council could amend the number of paid days from 3 consecutive days to 10 consecutive days. The handbook currently provides for 3 paid Bereavement days. Council discussed the provision and determined the number of paid Bereavement days would remain at 3. Roll call vote showed 5 ayes.

ORDINANCES-FIRST READ:

- a. Commissioner Adleman made a motion to waive the first read and move to the second read Ordinance 2787 amending Chapter 18 Businesses, adding a new Article XII Entitled Regulations for Unscheduled Bus Stops. Commissioner Prentice second the motion. Voice vote carried the motion. Commissioner Adleman said he is concerned with large numbers of people not being able to care for by coming in unannounced via bus drops. Attorney Sosnowski said the Ordinance is not meant to address the migrant issue, but to provide safe and orderly mass transportation, of passengers on unannounced, unscheduled bus stops within the City. Administrator

Hoppes said she has been in communication with Emergency Planning in Winnebago County to transport immigrants to the Chicago Landing Zone should any come in to the City. Commissioner Adleman made a motion to approve Ordinance 2787 amending Chapter 18 Businesses, adding a new Article XII Entitled Regulations for Unscheduled Bus Stops. Commissioner Morse second the motion. Roll call vote showed 5 ayes.

RESOLUTIONS:

- a. Commissioner Adleman made a motion to approve Resolution 6508 approving an Agreement with Flow-Technics, Inc to provide Inspection Services of the Sewer Plant Blowers. Commissioner Prentice second the motion. Roll call vote showed 5 ayes.
- b. Commissioner Morse made a motion to approve Resolution 6509 approving an Agreement with Motorola Solutions, Inc. to provide Public Safety Network Services at a cost of up to \$46.00 per month per radio. Commissioner Prentice second the motion. Roll call vote showed 5 ayes.
- c. Commissioner Prentice made a motion to approve Resolution 6510 approving a Professional Services Proposal with Fehr Graham Engineers to provide a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment for the property commonly known as the Union Pacific Right-Of-Way at Shirland Avenue in South Beloit, Illinois. Commissioner Adleman second the motion. Roll call vote showed 5 ayes.
- d. Commissioner Morse made a motion to approve Resolution 6511 approving the Intergovernmental Agreement for Firefighting and Emergency Medical Services between the Town of Beloit, Wisconsin, and the City of South Beloit. Commissioner Adleman second the motion. Fire Chief Griffin thanked everyone for their comments in Public Comment. Chief Griffin said staffing in the department has been worked on for the entire time that he has been Chief. The Fire Department is required by Illinois State Statute to go through a process for applicants. When the last round was out for applications the City only had 3 applicants for 2 open full-time positions. Only 1 applicant accepted the position. Chief Griffin said the agreement with the Town of Beloit will allow South Beloit to be staffed every day. Auto Aid is required, otherwise there won't be any help for any Fire Department. Commissioner Morse said the agreement is nothing against the current staff. The agreement will be a model for the future. Commissioner Morse said the direction of volunteer fire service is dying. Local Fire Departments will have different trucks. Attorney Sosnowski said the Town of Beloit asked that the choice state of law be in Wisconsin, which means if there were a disagreement with the parties the City would have to hire a Wisconsin attorney to represent it. Administrator Hoppes said when she was hired as the City Administrator the Fire Department was the number 1 issue. The topic is emotional, but the agreement provides a way to get seasoned leadership. Previously new Fire Department employees have struggled with being in charge. Commissioner Morse said the City could hire a full time Chief, but that would not help the issue. In the past it took 5 years to build the department and another 5 years to build an EMS service. Commissioner Hedrington said 2 years ago he wanted to hire a Chief, but the other Council members did not agree. Commissioner Hedrington said he is not in favor of the agreement with the Town of Beloit. Commissioner Adleman said he appreciates the passion of residents for the Fire Department. This agreement will allow the Fire Department to grow. Mayor Fitzgerald said years ago families would serve on the Fire Department, however; the past few years the Fire Department has seen good people come in to serve but with no experience. There have been numerous full-time firefighters hired by the City that have left for more experience and better pay. Mayor Fitzgerald said the city even offered a \$10,000 sign on bonus. Roll call vote showed 4 ayes and 1 nay by Commissioner Hedrington.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 6:17 pm on a motion made by Commissioner Adleman the council approved going into Executive Session. Commissioner Prentice second the motion. The purpose of Executive Session is to:

1. Discuss the purchase of real property as provided by 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (5) of the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

RECONVENE TO
OPEN SESSION:

At 6:29 pm.

ROLL CALL:

Roll call showed all members previously at the meeting at the reconvening of the meeting.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURN:

At 6:29 pm on a motion by Mayor Fitzgerald second by Commissioner Adleman. Voice vote carried the motion.

Mayor

City Clerk

Approved: