

MINUTES
THE CITY OF ST. CHARLES
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
ALD. STEVE WEBER, CHAIR
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 2 EAST MAIN STREET

1. Call to Order

Chairman Weber called the meeting to order at 7:17 pm.

2. Roll Call

Present: Ald. Silkaitis, Ald. Foulkes, Ald. Bongard, Ald. Muenz, Ald. Gehm,
Ald. Lencioni, Ald. Pietryla, Ald. Wirball, Ald. Bessner

Absent: None

3. Administrative - None

4. Omnibus Vote

Items with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine matters and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion on these items unless a council member/citizen so requests, in which event the item will be removed from the consent agenda and considered in normal sequence on the agenda.

Motion by Ald. Pietryla, second by Ald. Wirball to approve the Omnibus vote.

Voice Vote: Ayes – unanimous; Nays – none; Absent – none; Ald. Weber did not vote as chair. **Motion Carried.**

5. Finance Department

*a. Budget Revisions for January 2024.

b. Presentation of a Funding Request from the St. Charles History Museum in the Amount of \$60,000 in the FY 2024-2025 City Budget.

Alexander Cullum, the Executive Director of the St. Charles History Museum made a presentation reviewing the mission statement and 2023 accomplishments. He thanked sponsors, volunteers and staff for their efforts. A question was asked if grants will be secured for 2024 since there were not any in 2023. Mr. Cullum explained this was due to not having an executive director for the first half of 2023 and ensured there would be more opportunity for grants in 2024. Ald. Lencioni stated he supported their efforts but does not support a funding increase from last fiscal year.

Motion by Ald. Wirball, second by Pietryla recommend approval of the Funding Request from the St. Charles History Museum in the Amount of \$60,000 in the FY 2024-2025 City Budget.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Ald. Pietryla, Ald. Wirball, Ald. Bessner, Ald. Silkaitis, Ald. Foulkes, Ald. Bongard, Ald. Muenz, Ald. Gehm. Nays: Ald. Lencioni. Ald. Weber did not vote as Chair. **Motion Carried.**

c. **Presentation of a Funding Request from the Visitors Cultural Commission for Consideration in the FY 2024-2025 City Budget.**

Bill Hannah gave a presentation on behalf of Anne Becker, the Chair of the Visitors Cultural Commission who was unable to be there. He explained the City annually budgets funds for the VCC from a portion of the City's hotel/motel tax revenue which is allocated to St. Charles-based nonprofit organizations providing programs that promote arts and cultural events within the City. The request is for an increase in the funding amount of 10-20% above the current fiscal year. Several committee members supported to meet in the middle at a 15% increase.

Motion by Ald. Wirball, second by Pietryla to recommend a 15% increase Funding Request from the Visitors Cultural Commission for Consideration in the FY 2024-2025 City Budget.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Ald. Pietryla, Ald. Wirball, Ald. Bessner, Ald. Silkaitis, Ald. Foulkes, Ald. Bongard, Ald. Muenz, Ald. Gehm. Nays: Ald. Lencioni. Ald. Weber did not vote as Chair. **Motion Carried.**

d. **Presentation of a Funding Request from the St. Charles Business Alliance in the Amount of \$798,600 for FY City Budget 2024-2025.**

Jenna Sawicki made a presentation that included the organization's mission, 2023 accomplishments, financial results, and the future activities and events planned for 2024-2025. Several committee members provided positive feedback about the Business Alliance contribution to the community and future events that will incorporate the 1st Street Plaza. A request was made by Ald. Wirball to have an update on a quarterly basis available to businesses.

Motion by Ald. Lencioni, second by Ald. Bongard recommend approval of a Funding Request from the St. Charles Business Alliance in the Amount of \$798,600 for FY City Budget 2024-2025.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Ald. Lencioni, Ald. Pietryla, Ald. Wirball, Ald. Bessner, Ald. Silkaitis, Ald. Foulkes, Ald. Bongard, Ald. Muenz, Ald. Gehm. Nays: none. Ald. Weber did not vote as Chair. **Motion Carried.**

e. **Recommendation to approve an Ordinance Amending Title 13 “Public Utilities” Chapter 13.12 “Sewers,” of the St. Charles Municipal Code.**

Bill Hannah referred to the Winter Budget Workshop held on January 22, 2024. One of the items discussed was the significant increasing cost of Water and Sewer Fund operations, annual debt service requirements due to new IEPA loans necessary to complete critical capital projects, and other capital project needs requiring funding.

He explained although a significant rate increase is needed to address the funding needs in the Water and Sewer Funds, staff recognizes that a significant increase may be difficult for many customers. Staff proposed as one option a series of moderate, 5% water and sewer rate increases over a four-year period effective for bills issued after June 1st of 2024 and each June 1st through 2027. These increases would provide some of the funding needed for operations and annual debt service requirements, and provide some additional funds for capital improvements to the systems. As part of this plan, staff will also look into supplementing, if necessary, the Water and Sewer Funds with other City resources in order to ensure critical capital projects necessary for system capacity and replacement continue moving forward.

Approval of multi-year rate increases allows the City to better plan for the funding of operations, debt service, and capital needs for the water and sewer funds.

The City is currently working with consultants to complete a facility master plan for the electric, water and sewer utilities. It is anticipated that these studies will be completed in fiscal year 2025. The City plans to evaluate options and proposals for a comprehensive utility rate study in order to develop rate options and structure for the future.

No rate increases are recommended at this time for the electric utility. The last time the City increased electric rates was five years ago in 2019. The financial impact of a 5% water and sewer rate increase on a typical utility bill with electric, water and sewer of \$270 is about \$7 per month, or an increase of about 2.8% overall on the monthly utility bill.

Ald. Bongard expressed concern this small increase would not make a big impact. He would like the rates to remain the same until a bigger solution can be made.

Heather McGuire reminded Committee about the utility rate study that had been completed last year and Council was not comfortable implementing the recommended rate increase at that time. She explained the 5% increase will help keep pace with inflation and still fund the City operations while waiting for the secondary utility rate study to be completed.

Motion by Ald. Wirball, second by Ald. Gehm recommend approval of an Ordinance Amending Title 13 “Public Utilities” Chapter 13.12 “Sewers,” of the St. Charles Municipal Code.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Ald. Lencioni, Ald. Pietryla, Ald. Wirball, Ald. Bessner, Ald. Silkaitis, Ald. Muenz, Ald. Gehm. Nays: Ald. Foulkes, Ald. Bongard. Ald. Weber did not vote as Chair. **Motion Carried.**

f. **Recommendation to approve an Ordinance Amending Title 13 “Public Utilities” Chapter 13.16 “Water,” of the St. Charles Municipal Code.**

Motion by Ald. Pietryla, second by Ald. Gehm recommend approval of an Ordinance Amending Title 13 “Public Utilities” Chapter 13.16 “Water,” of the St. Charles Municipal Code.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Ald. Lencioni, Ald. Pietryla, Ald. Wirball, Ald. Bessner, Ald. Silkaitis, Ald. Muenz, Ald. Gehm. Nays: Ald. Foulkes, Ald. Bongard. Ald. Weber did not vote as Chair. **Motion Carried.**

6. City Administration

a. **Recommendation to approve an Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 2023-M-17 with Regard to the Deferred Imposition of a Municipal Push Tax on Plays of Video Gaming Terminals.**

Heather McGuire explained this is an extension of the Ordinance that was passed on May 1, 2023. Since there continues to be a lack of regulatory guidance and pending litigation that creates uncertainty about how the tax may be imposed, this Ordinance defers the implementation of the tax to January 1, 2025. City Attorney Nick Peppers explained this case is still in the appellate court and pending that resolution.

Ald. Lencioni expressed his concern about the businesses share of this revenue stream being affected by the implementation of this tax and will not be in support of this tax in the future.

Heather McGuire explained this Ordinance is drafted to reflect the intent of passing the tax through to the user of the terminal and not a tax on the Operator or impact the businesses who have video gaming terminals. She noted if this extension is not maintained on the record, then the City loses the right to implement it on a future date.

Motion by Muenz, second by Wirball recommend to approve an Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 2023-M-17 with Regard to the Deferred Imposition of a Municipal Push Tax on Plays of Video Gaming Terminals.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Ald. Pietryla, Ald. Wirball, Ald. Bessner, Ald. Silkaitis, Ald. Foulkes, Ald. Bongard, Ald. Muenz, Ald. Gehm. Nays: Ald. Lencioni. Ald. Weber did not vote as Chair. **Motion Carried.**

b. **Recommendation to approve a Resolution Creating a Task Force Regarding the Impact of the St. Charles Dam.**

Heather McGuire referred to the January 22, 2024 City Council Winter Workshop. She explained the United States Army Corp of Engineers released a draft study regarding removal of nine dams along the Fox River, including the St. Charles Dam. Before the City makes a determination regarding either support or opposition to removal of the Dam, the City must assess multiple factors, including gathering public input. The City believes the creation of a task force to solicit public input and analyze all the relevant information is the most prudent approach with the task force making final comments to the City by March 1, 2025. Any costs would be split by Park District and City Council to be preapproved by both groups before those expenditures would be made.

Several alderpersons expressed concern of wanting an un-biased group to be appointed to the task force.

Heather McGuire explained the task force is not designed to make a recommendation, but it will assess and provide the information that has been gathered to City Council. Mayor Vitek will bring the task force appointments before City Council on February 20 with the approval of this resolution.

Motion by Lencioni, second by Gehm recommend to approve a Resolution Creating a Task Force Regarding the Impact of the St. Charles Dam.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Ald. Lencioni, Ald. Pietryla, Ald. Wirball, Ald. Bessner, Ald. Silkaitis, Ald. Foulkes, Ald. Bongard, Ald. Muenz, Ald. Gehm. Nays: none. Ald. Weber did not vote as Chair. **Motion Carried.**

7. **Police Department**

- a. **Recommendation to Approve a Resolution for a Lease License Agreement with the Kane County State’s Attorney’s Office for Digital Forensic Services and Use of the St. Charles Police Department’s Digital Laboratory and Associated Office Space.**

Chief Jim Keegan explained the Police Department owns & operates a Forensic Recovery Evidence Device within the digital forensic lab. The Kane County State's Attorney's Office agrees to staff a member of their agency within this lab, along with associated equipment to assist in both internet-related crimes and technical support involving mobile device extraction. There is no cost to the City outside of office space and the use of digital server. All other equipment and personnel costs will be absorbed by the Kane County State's Attorney's Office.

Motion by Ald. Pietryla, second by Ald. Wirball recommend to Approve a Resolution for a Lease License Agreement with the Kane County State's Attorney's Office for Digital Forensic Services and Use of the St. Charles Police Department's Digital Laboratory and Associated Office Space.

Voice Vote: Ayes – unanimous; Nays – none; Absent – none; Ald. Weber did not vote as chair. **Motion Carried.**

8. Public Comment - None

9. Additional Items from Mayor, Council or Staff

10. Executive Session

- Personnel – 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)
- Pending, Probable or Imminent Litigation – 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11)
- Property Acquisition – 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5)
- Collective Bargaining – 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)
- Review of Executive Session Minutes – 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21)

11. Adjournment

Motion by Ald. Foulkes, second by Lencioni to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 pm.

Voice Vote: Ayes – unanimous; Nays – none; Absent – none; Ald. Weber did not vote as chair. **Motion Carried.**

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ADA Compliance

Any individual with a disability requesting a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in a public meeting should contact the ADA Coordinator, Jennifer McMahon, at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting. The ADA Coordinator can be reached in person at 2 East Main Street, St. Charles, IL, via telephone at (630) 377 4446 or 800 526 0844 (TDD), or via e-mail at jmcmahon@stcharlesil.gov. Every effort will be made to allow for meeting participation. Notices of this meeting were posted consistent with the requirements of 5 ILCS 120/1 et seq. (Open Meetings Act).