

City Council Meeting Minutes
April 23, 2018
7:30 p.m.

The Board of Aldermen met on Monday, April 23, 2018 in the Council Chamber at City Hall. Mayor Richard Bodi presided with the following present: Ald. Wade, Chism, Riley and Young, Cravens and White.

1. The Mayor called the meeting to order.

The Minutes from the April 9, 2018 meeting were presented. Ald. Chism made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ald. Wade seconded, all voted "yes" and the minutes were accepted.

2. Visitors: Lori Brotherton of 830 St. Anne appeared before the Council. Ms. Brotherton was concerned as to the rumor that the City was considering removing the Crepe Myrtle Trees on Main Street. She was speaking for the Riverbend Botanical Society whose members were present for the meeting. Ms. Brotherton had concerns that the removal of the trees would result in a barren and unappealing appearance down town. She mentioned that the museum usually has visitors at the museum from all 50 states and 20 foreign countries every year. She said that greenscapes were very important to citizen's health and wellbeing. She also mentioned all the work that the club members had put into taking care of these trees as well as the expense of purchasing them. They had heard that the reason for removing the trees was that there are water and sewer lines directly underneath the trees on both sides of the street. She asked how deep down the lines were located. Mayor Bodi stated that the frost line was 18". Ms. Brotherton asked why remove them now, why not wait until if and when they caused a problem. Pam Lloyd of 862 St. John stated that if the Crepe Myrtles were removed, then several of the Botanical Society members would be resigning. She said that a great deal of work and public money had been used to plant these trees to bring beauty to down town and that the members felt very strongly about this. Ms. Ella LaValle of 820 Maple St., said that the Crepe Myrtle roots actually stay very shallow, usually no more than 12-15" and should not cause a problem to the water and sewer lines. Mayor Bodi told the group that the main reason their removal is being considered is that there had been several complaints about them causing a dangerous situation down town with people being unable to see oncoming vehicles when they are attempting to cross the street. A lot of the trees are now at a level that is causing a problem and no one wanted to see anyone get hurt because of them. He also said that he had received numerous complaints from residents on the north end of Main that this

has increase their mowing time by 3 times what it had been before the trees were planted. Ald. Wade asked if the trees could not be transplanted to the parks or elsewhere in town. Ms. LaValle said that several on the levee need to be replaced so some could go there. The Mayor suggested that the Walking Track at Davis Park would be a nice place for them. Ald. Riley asked if the trees downtown couldn't be cut back so that they no longer obscured the view of pedestrians. It was also recommended that the property owners on the north end be contacted to see if they wanted to keep the trees planted on their property and take care of them, themselves. The trees on property that is a problem for homeowners, could be transplanted elsewhere in town. The Mayor asked if the group felt that compromise would be okay with them. They all seemed okay with the solution of trimming the trees on South Main and involving the homeowners on North Main with transplanting the ones removed to other locations in the City. Ms. LaValle did warn the Council that they needed to wait until fall to trim and/or transplant the trees. Ald. Young stated that the trees seemed to be pretty resilient, couldn't they be cutback to 40% for the safety of the citizens and still expect the trees to survive. Ald. Wade said that they probably would not be getting to much larger since their dirt area is quite limited. Ms. Lloyd stated that the original goal of planting all the crepe myrtles throughout town was to have a rose and crepe myrtle festival much like the Dogwood Azalea Festival that Charleston has. The Mayor said that they would do some investigation and definitely talk to the property owners involved and see what could be done. He thanked the ladies for coming and for all their hard working in making our downtown look beautiful. Ms. Ella LaValle said that they would definitely keep taking care of the plantings in the concrete planters.

3. Bill 18-1290 – Bill 1290, an ordinance acknowledging the transfer of real estate to the City of New Madrid. Bootheel Resource Conservation and Development, Inc. is transferring their interest in the "USDA" building on South Hwy 61 to the City of New Madrid. Ald. Chism made a motion and Ald. Young seconded and a roll call vote was taken as follows: Ald. Wade – yes, Ald. Chism – yes, Ald. Riley – yes, Ald. Young – yes, Ald. Cravens – yes and Ald. White – yes. The ordinance was adopted.
4. A Letter of Engagement from "Beussink, Hey, Roe & Stroder, L.L.C., Certified Public Accountants was presented to the Council to conduct an audit of all of the City's financial statements of the governmental activities, business-type activities, each major fund and the aggregate remaining fund information, including the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the basic financial statements of the City of New Madrid for the year ended December 31, 2017 for the amount \$17,300.00. Ald. Chism made a motion to approve and Ald. White seconded. A roll call vote was taken as follows;

Ald. Riley – yes, Ald. Wade – yes, Ald. Chism – yes, Ald. Young – yes, Ald. Cravens – yes, Ald. White – yes. The letter of engagement was accepted.

5. Liquor License Renewals were presented for M & M Deli and for Star Mart. Chief Higgerson was asked if there had been law enforcement issues at M & M. He stated that there had not. Ald. White asked if all the required documents and payments had been made. Clerk Chapman said that they had. A roll Call Vote was taken as follows: Ald. Riley – yes, Ald. Wade – yes, Ald. Chism – yes, Ald. Young – yes, Ald. Cravens – yes, Ald. White – yes. M & M Deli’s renewal was approved.

Chief Higgerson was asked if there had been any law enforcement issues at Star Mart. He said not at this location and definitely no liquor violations. When asked if their documents and payments were in order, Adm. Richard McGill stated that they had an unpaid balance of over \$2700 in their utility account. They have been on the cutoff list every month but no action had been taken since generally, businesses are given a chance to get caught up since a bad month could cause them to be in arrears. However, with a continual balance this high, it posed a concern that they might close and leave the City with their balance unpaid. A roll call vote was taken as follows: Ald. Riley – deny, Ald. Wade – deny, Ald. Chism – approve, Ald. Young – deny, Ald. Cravens – deny, Ald. White – deny. City Clerk Karen Chapman was instructed to inform the owner that their renewal had been denied but they could appear before the next council meeting on May 14th to appeal the Council’s decision and reapply.

Ald. White asked if we needed to revise our policy as it pertains to businesses and the payment of their utility bills. He asked if we needed to extend the deadline. Kristy Taylor, Finance Officer said that some businesses are on the late list every month and that due our policy of calling everyone on the list 3 times, we have had to delay the actual cutoff since it is so time consuming to do all that calling, especially since many of the numbers are incorrect or disconnected. Ald. Riley stated that everyone should be back to -0- every month. Atty. Bock said that we need to get a standard policy and apply it to everyone. Ald. Riley said that maybe we should contact some other cities and see how they are doing it. Adm. McGill said that unfortunately MLP is not a charity but a business and needs to be run like one. Mayor Bodi said that is true but our businesses have employees that are also affected by what we do with the businesses.

6. City Administrator’s Report:

Adm. McGill updated the board on the progress of chlorine handling procedures. He also stated that City staff is working on training and equipment/suits. These items were not budgeted and will be costly.

Adm. McGill stated that the City is working with Magnitude 7 Metals to insure the company has sufficient rail access in St. Jude Industrial Park. The City owns a portion of the track in the park and agreed to joint use of the track for the company's use.

Adm. McGill is examining ways to make the cutoff process more efficient and effective. Examples include automated notification of past due accounts as well as including businesses on the cutoff list.

City staff met with EBO MD to discuss a facility here in New Madrid. The company, based out of the Cape/Jackson area, is a direct primary care practice providing medical services to a limited number of patients who pay a monthly fee. It doesn't take the place of health insurance. A monthly membership fee covers general adult physicals, women's healthcare, newborn and pediatric care, wellness education, chronic disease management, minor procedures and coordination of care with specialists when needed. They also offer the added savings and convenience of an onsite wholesale pharmacy and lab.

Ald. Riley asked if anyone had had any calls about discolored water and was the water department doing any flushing. Adm. McGill said that there had been a couple of fires last week and that causes a drain on water which results in sediment. The water department is scheduled to flush on the 14th.

Ald. White made a motion to move to a closed session pursuant to B. "Leasing, purchase or sale of real estate where public knowledge of the transaction might adversely affect the legal consideration there for (RSMo 610.021.2). Ald. Chism seconded. A roll call vote was conducted as follows: Ald. Riley --yes, Ald. Wade -- yes, Ald. Chism -- yes, Ald. Young -- yes, Ald. Cravens -- yes and Ald. White -- yes.

Ald. Chism made a motion to return to open session, Ald. White seconded and all voted "yes".

The levee district is requesting that the City Police Department assist in patrolling the levee out to the dam. They have some issues with vandalism and also concerned about a liability issue if individuals might get injured while there. They do not want to stop people from fishing there, but need help with these issues. Chief Joey Higginson said that it absolutely would not be a problem for the patrolmen to continue out to the dam and back when they make their rounds throughout the city. He said that this would not tax the police department at all and that they would be glad to assist.

There being no further business to discuss, Ald. White made a motion to adjourn and Ald. Chism seconded. All voted "yes" and the meeting adjourned.