



**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF THE
CITY OF NEOGA
HELD IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, MUNICIPAL BUILDING
533 CHESTNUT AVENUE, NEOGA, IL
OCTOBER 24, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Pro-tem Hakman. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Those present were Commissioners Helm, Edwards, and Mayor Pro-tem Hakman. Commissioner Groves and Mayor Hartke were absent. Others present were City Clerk Evans, City Treasurer Diana Foor, Public Works Superintendent Shawn Durbin, Chief of Police Andy Schabbing, Building Inspector Jeff Morrison, Engineer Lee Beckman, Neoga News Editor Billie Chambers, Tom Strohl, Cathy Strohl, Dean Fearday, Marcia Fearday, Sarah Walk, Debby Thomas.

MINUTES

After reviewing the regular session minutes from October 11, 2022, Commissioner Edwards made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helm. Ayes, Commissioner Edwards, Helm, and Mayor Pro-tem Hakman. Nays, none. Motion carried. 3-0.

After reviewing the executive session minutes from September 26th and October 11, 2022, Commissioner Edwards made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helm. Ayes, Commissioner Edwards, Helm, and Mayor Pro-tem Hakman. Nays, none. Motion carried. 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Debby Thomas told the Council that she drove to the Ashmore/Kansas area and spoke to a resident that lives next to a solar farm. The resident said that they were not notified about the solar farm until the semi-trucks started rolling in to drop off enough rock that the ground will never be farmed again unless it is all removed. Thomas said that the resident was told by the solar company that they would plant trees for a barrier, but they would have to sign a contract first. After reading the contract, it limited current and future property owners from filing any charges against the solar farms. Thomas asked that the Council remember that they were elected by the residents of Neoga to protect the interests of Neoga.

Cathy Strohl said that she has been to all the meetings about solar farms in Neoga and is asking the Council to follow what the citizens are asking, and that is to deny the variance.

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Dean Fearday told the council that the location for the proposed USS Rail Solar Garden is a perfect location for the solar farm because it is outside the corporate limits, and very few people will be able to see the farm. According to Fearday, the direct benefits to the city, businesses, and the school would be phenomenal. Fearday said that over \$10 million would filter into the local economy because of the clean energy. It would not use any city funds or state funds. Fearday said that the city residents would have a savings of 20% on their Ameren energy bill once they signed a contract. Currently, Ameren is charging 4.17 cents per kilowatt, and after December it will jump to 12.24 cents per kilowatt Fearday said. Mr. Fearday explained that there have been 10 studies that show solar farms do not cause cancer, and there is no glare from the panels.

Tom Strohl told the Council that he has attended all but one meeting regarding the solar farms and he said that the city's responsibilities are to the citizens of Neoga. Strohl asked that the council research the citizens' benefits. Strohl feels the first month or two they will see a benefit, but after that they will promise the moon but won't deliver. He asked the council to please deny the variance.

Jeff Morrison addressed the Council on behalf of the Zoning Board reminded them that the zoning board recommended to deny the request. Morrison said that in the 65 pages of transcripts from the meetings, there were only two positive comments.

Sarah Walk told the Council that she is the closest resident to the propose solar farm, and she is concerned with the possibility of contamination in the soil and water which would affect her family. According to Walk, even a smaller farm would have a "brightness". Ms. Walk said that the solar company wouldn't be building the solar farm if they weren't getting tax credits from the State of Illinois. Ms. Walk asked that the proposed "temporary use" solar farm be denied.

After all the public comments were discussed, Commissioner Edwards made a motion to accept the Zoning Board of Appeals recommendation to deny the solar farm variance for PINS: 06-18-300-007, 06-18-400-011, 06-08-328-001, 06-08-200-004, and 06-08-400-005. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helm. Ayes, Commissioner Edwards and Helm. Nays, Mayor Pro-Tem Hakman. Motion carried 2-1.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS, MAYOR HARTKE

PURCHASE OF RADIO & DOCKING STATION

Police Chief Schabbing informed the Council that the new squad car is ready to be picked up from the dealership. Schabbing said that he would like to purchase a radio and docking station for the Dodge Charger so the car can continue to be used by part time officers. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Edwards made a motion to purchase the radio and docking station in the amount of \$765. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helm. Ayes, Commissioner Edwards, Helm, and Mayor Pro-tem Hakman. Nays, none. Motion carried. 3-0.

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FINANCE, COMMISSINER GROVES

MONTHLY BILLS

After reviewing the bill list, Commissioner Edwards made a motion to pay the monthly bills as presented in the amount of \$158,893.07. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helm. Ayes, Commissioner Edwards, Helm, and Mayor Pro-tem Hakman. Nays, none. Motion carried. 3-0.

PUBLIC PROPERTY, COMMISSIONER HAKMAN

LEE BECKMAN, PROJECT UPDATES

Engineer Beckman updated the Council on the following projects:

Sewer Plant – the Contractor is complete with the project. The current completion date was December 31, 2021. The Contractor was substantially complete on May 20, 2022. There is \$165,000 in liquidated damages being resolved.

Brighton Cabinets – Change Order #5 for an increase of \$20,806.01 was approved and Pay Estimate #5 for \$16,185.87 has been approve and sent to IDOT. IDOT is completing material certification prior to approving.

CDAP Water Grant – Beckman gave the council a map showing the grant application area. The application was submitted to DCEO on August 3, 2021 and was funded. The NOSAF was received on August 22, 2022. Due to the increase of material prices, the estimate is approximately \$252,000 higher. The NOSAF will be returned to DCEO on November 22, 2022.

ITEP – The City applied for a \$1,014,960 grant with \$253,740 in leverage. The project map and estimate were given to the council. Grant applications were submitted on December 1, 2017, and the project received partial (small) funding in the amount of \$26,400 (PE 1). The Joint Agreement has been approved and executed by the city and approved by IDOT for Preliminary Engineering 1. The ITEP grant was funded with only 10% leverage required for engineering and construction. The joint agreement has been sent to IDOT. The engineering agreement has been approved by the city. The engineering agreement was approved and returned from IDOT

RLF & State Grant Project – the Contractor has completed the project. The current completion date was September 15, 2021, and the contractor was substantially complete on May 25, 2022. There is \$141,000 in liquidated damages bring resolved.

RLF INVOICES FROM M & G #27828, 27920, AND 28011

Engineer Beckman explained that each invoice was for engineering on the RLF project. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Edwards made a motion to pay the invoices totaling \$10,435. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helm. Ayes, Commissioner Edwards, Helm, and Mayor Pro-tem Hakman. Nays, none. Motion carried. 3-0.

SEWER PLANT IMPROVEMENT INVOICES FROM M & G #27912 AND 28003

After reviewing the invoices, Commissioner Helm made a motion to pay the invoices totaling \$1,892.08. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Edwards. Ayes, Commissioner Helm, Edwards, and Mayor Pro-tem Hakman. Nays, none. Motion carried. 3-0.

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M & G INVOICE #28021 FOR ITEP PROJECT

After reviewing the invoice, Commissioner Helm made a motion to approve the invoice in the amount of \$454.90. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Edwards. Ayes, Commissioner Helm, Edwards, and Mayor Pro-tem Hakman. Nays, none. Motion carried. 3-0.

INVOICES FROM STEVE PAMPERIN FOR RLF PROJECT

The Council reviewed the invoices from Steve Pamperin. After little discussion, Commissioner Edwards made a motion to pay invoice #03012021 and 04302022 in the amount of \$7,560. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helm. Ayes, Commissioner Edwards, Helm, and Mayor Pro-tem Hakman. Nays, none. Motion carried. 3-0.

INVOICE FROM STEVE PAMPERIN FOR GRANT ADMINISTRATION

After reviewing the invoice from Steve Pamperin for grant administration service, Commissioner Edwards made a motion to pay the invoice in the amount of \$3,720. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helm. Ayes, Commissioner Edwards, Helm, and Mayor Pro-tem Hakman. Nays, none. Motion carried 3-0.

STREETS AND ALLEYS, COMMISSIONER EDWARDS

PURCHASE OF SALT SPREADER

Commissioner Edwards told the Council that the salt spreader needs to be replaced before the winter season arrived. After the Council discussed the invoice, Commissioner Helm made a motion to purchase a new salt spreader in the amount of \$2,700. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Edwards. Ayes, Commissioner Helm, Edwards, and Mayor Pro-tem Hakman. Nays, none. Motion carried. 3-0.

HEALTH AND SAFETY, COMMISSIONER HELM

Commissioner Helm said that he reviewed the sidewalks and noted some that need to be repaired. He would like to add more sidewalks to complete a loop from one side of town to the other side. Tom Strohl recommended talking to the ag department about teaching a trade and having them pour some new sidewalks.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Edwards made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helm. Ayes, Commissioner Edwards, Helm, and Mayor Pro-tem Hakman. Nays, none. Motion carried. 3-0.